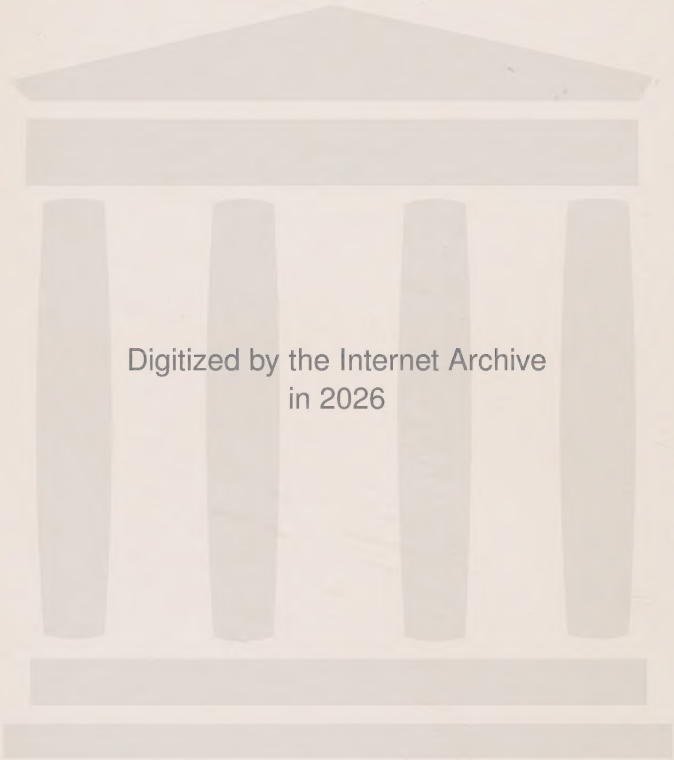
THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

W. S. LILLY

BIBLIOTHECA
FF. PRÆDICATORUM
CONVENTUS
CIVIT. BENITIÆ
Lit.
Pl.


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/claimsofchristia0000will_c5h0

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ANCIENT RELIGION AND MODERN THOUGHT. Second Edition. Demy 8vo, 12*s*.

CHAPTERS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY. With an Introductory Dialogue on the Philosophy of History. 2 vols. Demy 8vo. 24*s*.

A CENTURY OF REVOLUTION. Second Edition, Revised. Demy 8vo, 12*s*.

ON RIGHT AND WRONG. Second Edition, Revised. Demy 8vo, 12*s*.

ON SHIBBOLETHS. Demy 8vo, 12*s*.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

WILLIAM SAMUEL LILLY

HONORARY FELLOW OF PETERHOUSE, CAMBRIDGE

"Nihil de causa sua [veritas] deprecatur, quia nec de conditione miratur. Scit se peregrinam in terris agere, inter extraneos facile inimicos invenire, ceterum genus, sedem, spem, gratiam, dignitatem, in cœlis habere. Unum gestit interdum, ne ignorata damnetur."—TERTULLIAN.

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1894

WESTMINSTER:
PRINTED BY NICHOLS AND SONS,
25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

My dear Wilfrid Ward :

This book is largely due to a suggestion made to me by your father, when I was on a visit to him at Weston Manor, some sixteen years ago. Had he been still alive, I should have asked permission to dedicate it to him, in recognition not only of its origin, but of the great debt which students of philosophy owe to his labours. Whether he would have assented to all that I advance, I do not know. No doubt I should, from time to time, have heard from him that interrogative "Because?" with which his friends were so familiar. But what I have said, in my Seventh Chapter, as to the need of widening and supplementing the philosophy current among Catholics, would, I feel sure, have had his hearty approval. That was a frequent theme of his conversation and of his letters, as, no doubt, you know better than I do. I remember once citing to him, in this connection, St. Augustine's dictum, "Adde ædificium sed noli relinquere fundamentum." He said, "That is quite right. The scholastic philosophy is the foundation. We must maintain this against our opponents; and we

must try to convince our friends of the necessity of building on it—perhaps a harder matter."

With that view you will, I think, be in full accord. Indeed, in your own philosophical writings, you have acted on it with a felicity and a success which have obtained general recognition. You have taken up and have carried forward, in your own brilliant way, your father's work. You have, at the same time, done much to diffuse a true estimate of his massive intellectual gifts, and of his singularly attractive character. To your filial reverence and appreciative devotion, we owe the two volumes which give so admirable an account of his life and thought, and the two others containing his contributions—the value of which is not easily overrated —to the great metaphysical questions in which he victoriously defended the right side.

Such were the thoughts which led me to wish that this book should be associated with your name. And I thank you for the kind readiness with which you have allowed me to gratify that wish. I would that the volume were worthier of you and of your father's memory. No one can be more sensible than I am how inadequate is its treatment of the great subject with which it deals. I may, however, plead in extenuation, that my design has been pretty much that described in the words of Montesquieu : "Il ne faut pas tellement épuiser

un sujet qu'on ne laisse rien à faire au lecteur. Il ne s'agit pas de faire lire, mais de faire penser." If the following pages are of use in that way, you will, I trust, pardon their many imperfections. "In magnis voluisse sat est."

I am, my dear Wilfrid Ward,

Ever yours sincerely,

W. S. LILLY.

May 1st, 1894.

Portions of this work, which have appeared in the Quarterly, Dublin, English Historical, and New Reviews, now take their proper place here, by the kind permission of the respective Editors.

SUMMARY.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE WORLD.

PAGE

1. It is not intended, in this work, to consider what Christianity requires men to believe and to do: or to scrutinize the grounds whereon it bases its claims as a teacher of faith and morals 1

2. The point of view here taken is what may be called the publicist's: and this book deals with Christianity as a fact in the world's history 1

3. The Claims which, as an unquestionable matter of history, Christianity has from the first made against the world may be reduced to two: First, as a religion it claims to be the the sole and sufficient oracle of divine truth, superseding all other modes of faith. Secondly, as a Church it claims to be a polity, perfect and complete in itself, counting its subjects in all lands, collateral with secular States, but belonging to none of them 2

4. In this volume these Claims of Christianity will be considered, first as regards the two other creeds, besides the Christian, which claim universality,

PAGE

Buddhism and Islām: and then as affecting, and affected by, civil society, in the Middle Ages, in the epoch of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and in this New Age 4

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

Buddhism is the most prevailing of all religions, if judged by the vague and fallacious standard of statistics. But as a faith, it is decadent and moribund, and cannot be considered an effective rival to the ecumenical Claims of Christianity. . . 5

There is, however, another point of view from which Buddhism merits consideration in the present volume. There are those who tell us that the Evangelical narrative is largely plagiarised from Buddhism. And the Claims of Christianity are inseparably bound up with the historical character of that narrative . 6

The plan of this Chapter is first to set forth the Buddhist Gospel in its essential features; and secondly to leave the discussion of the question which has arisen regarding the analogies between it and the Christian Gospel, to two authorities whose words will carry special weight: Cardinal Newman and Mr. Rhys Davids 7

The Buddhist Gospel 8

Between this narrative and the Evangelical, there are numerous and very striking parallelisms, which

PAGE

attracted Cardinal Newman's attention. His letter asking for information regarding the authorities for the Buddhist legend 25

Mr. Rhys Davids' letter on this subject . . . 27

Cardinal Newman's further exposition of the coincidences which he thought "so startling." . . . 29

Mr. Rhys Davids cannot believe that the Buddhist traditions had any influence at all over Christian belief. The resemblances between the two Gospels, striking at first sight, are shown by the slightest examination, to rest on a basis of belief quite contradictory. We may conclude, then, to the untenableness of the objection urged from Buddhism against the Claims of Christianity 36

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLĀM.

Islām is not, like Buddhism, a decadent and moribund faith; it is still true to its dominant idea, and the greatness of its missionary work is universally acknowledged 37

At a very critical moment in the fortunes of Europe, Islām narrowly failed to wrest from Christianity the control of Western civilization. And there is nothing intrinsically irrational in the supposition that it will achieve, in the future, the triumph which escaped it in the past 38

PAGE

Such a view is unfamiliar to us. But there are fifty millions of our fellow subjects who hold it. They have recently found an effective spokesman in a member of their own Church. Syed Ameer Ali's elaborate work, *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, enables us to contemplate Christianity from without and Islām from within 39

It is in fact an Apology for Islām which deserves full and fair consideration 39

In the present age such full and fair consideration may be asked for with good hope of success . . 40

In this Chapter Syed Ameer Ali's apology for Mohammed's life will first be considered; and then his claims for Mohammed's religion 43

The career of Mohammed falls into three divisions. First, his life to his fortieth year—the year 610 of our era—when he entered upon his public ministry. Next the twelve years, ending with 622—the date of the Hijra—in which he devoted himself to the peaceful propagation of his doctrine. And lastly his ten years as chief, warrior, supreme magistrate, and law-giver, until his death in 632 43

With regard to the first of these stages of Mohammed's existence, there is little difference of opinion among his biographers: all agree in ascribing to his youth a correctness of deportment and a purity of manners rare among the people of Mecca . . . 44

The second period in his life begins with his fortieth year, in which the prophetic call came to him. Persecution arises, as his doctrine spreads, and he

PAGE

sends his disciples to Medina, which city he himself reaches after many perilous adventures on the 2nd of July, 622 49

With the Hijra begins that last act in Mohammed's life which ends with his death in 632. It is certain that the net result of his work during that decade was to cleanse Arabia from foul idolatry and gross immorality. Equally certain is it, that during this time of triumph "plain living and high thinking" marked his life 53

Still, it is this last act of the Prophet's career which presents the greatest difficulties to his apologist. Intolerance, imposture, sensuality, and cruelty are alleged against him 54

None of these charges, however, if fully and fairly examined, seems sustainable 55

Such examination is not superfluous. No conclusion as to the merits or demerits of a particular religious system can justly be derived from the vices or virtues of individual professors of it. But religious innovators occupy a peculiar position. Their doctrine is one manifestation of their personality, and is best judged of in connection with other manifestations . 67

A certain spaciousness of thought is absolutely necessary if we would rightly judge of these questions. The fundamental principles of the moral law are eternal and immutable. Its apprehension varies indefinitely in different states of civilization; and a man is bound by it, in practice, only so far as he may, and therefore should, apprehend it . . . 68

PAGE

We must discern persons and things in their time, not out of it. And "their time" is not a mere question of chronology. Mohammed must be judged by the ethical standard of his own age and country, not of ours 68

So much concerning Mohammed as a man. Next, regarding him as a teacher, was the declaration false that he was a prophet, in the proper sense of the word, commissioned from on high for a work of spiritual and moral revelation? . . . 17

That he, himself, believed this is not open to doubt. And, in a certain sense, his belief seems warranted. . 72

But Syed Ameer Ali claims that Mohammed is "the grandest of figures upon whom the light of history has ever shone": that he "concentrated into a focus all the fragmentary lights which had ever fallen upon the heart of man": that Islām "represents the latest development of the religious faculties of our being". 76

These claims are untenable. It cannot be allowed that, considered as a universal religion, Islām represents an advance upon Christianity 77

Mohammed's great work was, first, that in his native country, he substituted for Polytheism, a Theism akin to that of the Hebrew prophets; and secondly, that he substituted a higher morality for a lower. His ethics flowed from his Theism. Religion meant for him submission to the will of a moral governor of the universe 77

This is not fatalism. The existence of God and the free will of man are the postulates on which all his teaching is based 79

PAGE

We may fully admit the value of the great fundamental truths taught by Mohammed. But Christianity possesses them as fully as Islām. And it possesses, in rich abundance, much else which Islām does not possess 80

Islām lacks "that gift of fascination, strange, mysterious, truly divine, which has united all civilized mankind, without distinction of race, in the veneration of one and the same ideal issuing from Judæa." This, in truth, is the incommunicable prerogative of Christianity 80

There is a universe between the crude realism of Mohammed and the perfect idealism of Christ. In Him we have the all-sufficient standard, the absolute pattern of human life . . . 81

Syed Ameer Ali regards it as a fundamental defect in Christianity that the work of its Founder was left unfinished, and contrasts with this inchoate achievement, "the complete though simpler system of Mohammed." But the simplicity of Islām is the cause of its intellectual barrenness. It has not, like Christianity, a principle of development . 81

Islām is one of the poorest of religions. Christianity is the richest, the heir of all the ages, and the nursing mother of all the higher forms of moral and spiritual life 82

So much might suffice to show why Syed Ameer Ali's view of the comparative merits of Islām and Christianity seems untenable. There is, however, more to be said. The creed which he advocates would hardly

PAGE

be recognized as their own by the vast majority of Mohammedans. It is a sort of sublimated essence of Mohammedanism, a rationalised Islām . . 83

But an apologist for a religion should deal with it as an existing fact; should take it as it is, not as he thinks it ought to be 83

Islām may have still before it centuries of fruitful activity, but it is the religion of a low civilization destined to give way in the long run to a nobler faith; for the conception of the family which Mohammed has stereotyped is incompatible with the higher stages of human development 84

The position of women among Moslems is not a mere excrescence on Mohammed's system. It proceeds, as an inevitable consequence, from the essential defect in the conception whereon that system is based 85

Mohammedanism does not recognize that "man has demands for himself which will not be satisfied by being told that he is the servant of an absolute will." Hence the destruction, as of the family bonds of civil society, so of the family itself . . . 86

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTENDOM.

It is a fundamental idea of Christianity that "man has demands for himself which will not be satisfied by being told that he is the servant of an absolute will."

PAGE

Christianity is the perfect law of liberty; and the obedience which it demands is not the mechanical acquiescence of slaves, but the reasonable service of freemen. It is based upon the claims and prerogatives of conscience 87

It teaches that every member of the human race is, by an indefeasible divine right, independent of all earthly power in that sacred domain. In Christianity alone has been found a force able to destroy the domination of the State over the immaterial part of our nature, by a separation between temporal and spiritual authority 87

The conception of the Church as a divine kingdom, distinct from, though existing side by side with the kingdoms of this world, is its unique characteristic. And this conception, realised as a fact, it was, which rendered Christianity so detested by the rulers of the Roman Empire. It was as a Church that the new faith was the object of persecution 88

Constantine conceived the thought of using the new spiritual commonwealth as a bond to hold together his shattered realm. For a brief while this policy was successful. But it was reserved for a later time to witness the complete alliance of the Catholic Church and the Christian State. That alliance—the special feature and the chief interest of the Middle Ages—will be the subject of this Chapter . . . 88

The almost total neglect and absolute discredit to which the period intervening between the fall of Paganism and the Renaissance was so long consigned, is one of the most singular phenomena of history . . . 88

PAGE

In the second half of the last century the old evil tradition regarding the Middle Ages began to be questioned, and from that time until now much has been done to purge away the darkness that overlay them, and to let in the light of science . . . 96

The net result is that materials are now available from which the student, who rightly uses them, may derive a pretty accurate conception of human life and its conditions, in the different periods and regions of medieval Europe. A few suggestions will be offered here which may perhaps help in such use 96

The great rock upon which most students strike is generalization. The vulgar error is to regard the Middle Ages as an organic whole presenting the same social and political characteristics throughout . . . 96

But it is equally a mistake to allow the constant changes, of almost every kind, in the condition of Europe, traceable from the beginning of the ninth to the middle of the fifteenth century,—which may be taken as the true limits of the medieval period,—to obscure the fact that from a most important point of view, those centuries may properly be regarded as a whole 96

Between these two opposite and fundamental errors, there exists the ground for almost every variety of misconception, and it is hardly too much to say that every variety of misconception may be met with . 96

The besetting danger is "not so much of embracing falsehood for truth, as of mistaking part of the truth for the whole" 100

PAGE

It is only when the student learns the connection of part with part, separates what is in progress from what does not move, abstracts, analyzes, and defines, that the dimness of his mind's eye is removed, and in the mighty maze he traces the plan . . 103

Of course, some central point is necessary to him round which to group the objects which present themselves. That point may be differently chosen; but the only way of obtaining a just view of European history during the medieval period is by regarding it in the light of its dominant idea 103

There is one great fact running through it to which it owes its entity as a period, and which is imprinted on all its epochs, authorities, and customs: that fact is the prevalence of Catholic unity. Medieval history is beyond and before all things the history of the growth, empire, and decline of the idea which is conventionally expressed by the word Christendom, and the perpetual recognition of this truth is essential to its philosophical study . . . 103

This idea was the principal factor in European civilization from the time when it was distinctly manifested to the world by Leo III. and Charles the Great, to the time when the great religious and political changes associated with the names of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation proclaimed its downfall 104

And therefore in the study of the medieval period it should ever be kept in view . . . 106

The history of the world presents us with three distinct conceptions of the relation of religion to human

PAGE

society, conceptions which, for the present purpose, may be designated the ancient, the medieval, and the modern. The chief characteristics of these conceptions are respectively nationality, universality, and individuality 106

In the political communities of antiquity religion played a very important part. Its public profession was deemed essential to corporate existence; it was both the basis on which political communities rested and the tie which held them together. This public profession of religion was strictly national, a nation being a community united by the fact or the fiction of blood relationship 107

The conception now most widely prevailing among us is the exact contrary of this. It regards religion rather as a subjective speculation than as an objective fact: as a mere matter of individual concern: as a mere private thing for each man's own conscience . 108

The great and distinguishing peculiarity of the Middle Ages is that in them, throughout Europe, the whole structure of man's life, both public and private, was built upon religion 109

In those Ages, then, the religion of Europe was individual, for its call was personally addressed to each soul. But that call was a calling into a spiritual kingdom, the Catholic Church, with which Christendom was conterminous. The phrase "Christian commonwealth" was a reality, and the several European states were sections of it . . . 110

The first consequence of the religious unity of the medieval period is the position which, throughout it, was held by the Papacy. Although the actual

PAGE

influence of the Pope varied with the circumstances of the time and the character of the man, Europe was considered as one vast moral territory, of which he was the supreme magistrate . 113

Hardly less important than the legislative and judicial functions of the Pope, in the Ages of Faith, was his indirect temporal influence as the guide and father of the Christian family. In the civil and domestic life of Europe the consequences of religious unity are equally striking. Medieval religion was eminently constructive 119

Thus, it transformed the feudal system from a régime of violence and brute force into a hierarchy of duties . 121

And if religious unity was the bond of the medieval frame of civil society (which was not the Church's creation), much more was it the life of those institutions due mainly to her, which assured municipal prosperity as well as rational freedom . 121

A main characteristic impressed upon the Middle Ages by Catholic unity is the spirit of the family. Gilds, for example, were nothing but families artificially enlarged 126

Hence the high place given in those ages to the feeling of loyalty and the extreme blackness held to attach to the crime of treason 129

And here is to be found the explanation of their intolerance 130

This is the distinguishing note of the Middle Ages: they were before and beyond all things the Ages of

PAGE

Faith. But the undoubted fact, that the men of medieval times breathed an atmosphere of belief, is quite consistent with the equally indubitable fact that they perpetrated an enormous amount of wickedness 133

The object of this Chapter is not, however, to present an "abstract and brief chronicle" of the Middle Ages, but to exhibit the idea which dominated them, the idea expressed by the word Christendom 135

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RENAISSANCE.

The decline of the Medieval Period may be dated from the beginning of the Fourteenth Century; its close at the middle of the Fifteenth . . . 136

The condition of the Papacy offers striking evidence of the change that was taking place in the European order 137

Its influence throughout Europe is greatly impaired by the Avignonese Popes 138

And the Great Schism almost obliterates the Church's notes of unity and universality . . . 140

Under Martin V. the Papacy puts on some semblance of its former greatness 140

PAGE

But the European mind was greatly alienated from the Papal See 140

One main reason why this was so, is found in the inveterate abuses of the *Curia Romana*, which proved too strong for the efforts of reforming Pontiffs . 140

As it was in the Lead, so was it in the members. The Religious Orders were in decadence, and the secular clergy were, more or less, infected by the prevailing degeneracy 142

In the intellectual domain, the dissolution of the old order was proceeding. Scholasticism, the great work of the medieval mind, was effete . . 143

The Church was ceasing to be the one instrument of culture. A lay movement manifests itself in society. "Profane" knowledge gradually conquers an ample territory. There is a renascent interest in antiquity. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio are the precursors of the Fifteenth Century *Aufklärung* . 144

In the domain of art, the workings of the new spirit are most clearly traced 146

An intellectual unity was gradually taking the place of the old religious unity. In 1453 Christendom had ceased to exist. 147

From that year the Renaissance epoch may be best dated. But the chronology of ideas is, necessarily, to a great extent arbitrary 147

We may say the same of the formulas which we employ to describe ideas. It is impossible to express a movement like the Renaissance in a definition . . 148

PAGE

But if we wish to characterize it in a single phrase, we cannot perhaps find a happier one than Mill's: "that great breaking loose of the human faculties" . 149

The consequences of that "breaking loose" were momentous in every province of intellectual activity. But we are here confined to the consideration of its effects upon those Claims of Christianity which are the special subject of this volume . . . 149

Some eminent writers endeavour to distinguish between a Christian and a Pagan Renaissance . . . 150

What a Christian Renaissance might have been . . 150

But, as a matter of fact, we nowhere find, in the men of that time—not even in Nicholas V.—an adequate idea of a Christian Renaissance . . . 152

The Renaissance, whatever else it may or may not have been, was an eminently secularizing movement: and it secularized the Papacy, as it secularized everything else 153

It is this aspect of the Renaissance that is indicated by the term Humanism. The essence of Humanism, we are told, "consisted in a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determinations, and in the further perception that classical literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of moral and intellectual freedom" 153

The leading representatives of Humanism who flourished in Italy certainly put aside theological determinations, but they can hardly be said to have manifested

PAGE

a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being 154

And the "freedom" which they sought in classical literature was not moral but immoral: not intellectual but sensual 157

Italian Humanism was, speaking generally, a movement away from Christian Spiritualism: it was not to Classicalism, but to Paganism, that the Humanists returned 161

Its leaders paid to the existing religion a certain amount of outward homage, with whatever reservations of opinion, or derelictions of conduct. They did not attack the Church as a spiritual empire. On the contrary they gladly entered into her service . 161

And they gradually infected the Papacy with their spirit. No doubt the depravity of the Renaissance Pontiffs induced moral scepticism 161

In Alexander VI. "the Papacy stood forth in all the strength of its emancipation from morality." In Leo X. we have the "most pagan of Popes" . . 162

Singular mixture of Pagan and Christian traditions in this period 162

Humanism was, however, certainly less hostile to faith than to morals. It engendered philosophic doubt, but that doubt was not pushed to a negative conclusion; and it was combined with a respect for Christianity which was not wholly external . . 164

Montaigne is an excellent and not an unfavourable representative of its spirit 165

PAGE

So far the Renaissance was hostile to the Claims of Christianity as a religion 166

Savonarola, with the instinct of a Saint, had detected and denounced the Pagan tendencies of the movement. In him we must recognise the precursor of the great revival which was to the Catholic Church as life from the dead 166

The special function of the Jesuits in that great reaction was to combat the renascent Heathenism with arms furnished by itself 166

The exigencies of the age called the Jesuits into existence, and the charges that may be urged against them, if impartially examined, amount to this: that they faithfully represented the intellectual characteristics of the age, and sought to combat it with its own weapons 167

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

The view that the Protestant Reformation was the work of the Renaissance is tenable, if at all, only with large reservations 180

The Renaissance served the cause of the Protestant Reformation in three ways: (1) By the discredit which the Italian Humanists cast upon the Papacy and the Catholic Church; (2) By the exposure of ecclesiastical abuses and popular superstitions; (3) By translations of and commentaries upon the Sacred Scriptures 180

PAGE

But the ethos of the two movements was different . 180

This is clearly shown by the career of Erasmus; the ripest fruit, and the wholesomest, of the Revival of Learning, and, in the extreme complexity of his character, a true representative of the epoch . . 181

Erasmus inveighs against the ignorance of the decadent Religious Orders and the secularity of the Papacy, and desires a reform of the Church . . . 182

But he utters no word against the monastic institute, recognizes the Papacy as of divine institution and ecclesiastical necessity, and knows of no rule of faith outside of the Catholic Church . . . 185

He sympathized with Luther's protest against the scandals of indulgences 186

But with Luther in rebellion against the Pope he was far from sympathizing 186

And he devotes his pen to combating the Lutheran schism and to defending the Catholic Church . 187

His polemic is attended by a large measure of success . 188

In him we may see the Renaissance definitely taking part against the Protestant Reformation . . 188

The true cause of the Lutheran Reformation was not doctrinal: it is to be found in the crying ecclesiastical abuses of the time, and especially in the scandals attending the preaching of indulgence . . 188

Luther's theological opinions are in themselves entitled to small consideration. But their practical consequences were of the utmost gravity . . . 192

PAGE

His antinomian tenet of justification was productive of worse consequences in the lives of men than had been the traffic in indulgences which he denounced. It was fatal to the Claim of Christianity as a teacher of morality 192

And his doctrine of the subjective interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures by individuals was fatal to the Claims of Christianity both as a teacher of religion and as a Church 193

The true spheres of private judgment and of public judgment 193

While proclaiming the autonomy of private judgment Luther was in fact—perhaps half unconsciously—endeavouring to substitute in faith and morals for an authority universally recognized, and claiming a divine warrant, his own personal dictatorship resting merely on his own personal affirmation . . 196

It was manifestedly an insecure foundation. As he had applied his private judgment to Catholic dogmas, so his opponents, nay his disciples, applied their private judgment to his dogmas, with still more destructive results 196

Luther was driven, by the necessity of the case, to seek for some positive jurisdiction, "ut sit finis controversiarum" 197

He could find it only in the civil power . . . 197

It became the recognized Lutheran doctrine that princes had the highest juridical office over religious doctrine and the Church: they became Popes, and more than Popes, in their own dominions . . . 198

PAGE

The practical outcome of Luther's Reformation, in the countries which received it, was to obliterate from the minds and consciences of the people the belief that Christian men live under another and a higher law than the law of the State, to efface the distinction between the secular and the spiritual domain, and to deny the Claim of the Church as a spiritual empire, one and universal 198

The effect of the Protestant Reformation in England was similar and is more easily seen: for the ecclesiastical revolution began in this country where it ended in Germany 199

This fact has been long obscured by the tradition which represented the Anglican Reformation as having been wrought for the sake of doctrine, a tradition of which our popular histories have been the vehicles . . 199

But this tradition has almost completely disappeared. Every schoolboy now knows that in the ecclesiastical changes wrought by Henry VIII. religious motives had no place. He left the Catholic Creed as it was, merely detaching the Church in England from Catholic unity, and making himself its Supreme Head 202

The essence of the Protestant Reformation, in England as elsewhere, is not the denial of one or another article of the Catholic Creed, but the rejection of ecclesiastical unity and universality, and of the Papacy, which is the *Sacramentum Unitatis* . . 206

In comparison with Protestantism, all former schisms seem inconsiderable 207

After the first popular movement in its favour had died away, it allied itself with monarchical absolutism;

PAGE

and by the middle of the sixteenth century it had detached half Europe from the Holy See . . 208

The effect was to weaken in the general mind the idea of Catholicity: to deprive the Papal Chair of its international influence; to Italianize, in some sort, the whole Church, and to force her into a defensive attitude, whereby she was made to appear reactionary and obscurantist 209

But the result of Protestantism on the Catholic Church was not wholly disastrous. It brought about the Council of Trent, where the long deferred reforms were effected 211

In the fifty years immediately succeeding the Council, Catholicism regained much of the territory it had lost 212

The great instrument of its triumph was the Society of Jesus 212

The Jesuits were especially happy in the opportunity which the condition of Protestantism, particularly in Germany, offered for their mission . . . 212

The progress of the Catholic Reaction was arrested by the Thirty Years War. 213

The Peace of Westphalia, which established the principle "Cujus est regio, ejus est religio," sealed the spiritual slavery of half the German people . . 213

Unfortunately, the Church did not confine herself to spiritual weapons for the vindication of her claims which Protestantism made void. Paul III. re-established the Inquisition 214

PAGE

Judging with the wisdom easy of attainment after the event, we must pronounce this recourse to the secular arm a monstrous blunder 214

But to blame the men of those days for not seeing with our eyes is unphilosophical. The doctrine of toleration was strange to them 215

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW AGE.

The French Revolution aspired to remake man and society upon a model supplied by the teachings of Rousseau 218

The two primary postulates of his doctrine are the natural goodness of man and the absolute sovereignty of the individual 219

These postulates are directly opposed to the Claims of Christianity both as an idea and as a phenomenon . 219

Christianity, as a religion, is based upon the fact of sin, which it claims "to treat universally, and to heal" . 219

Christianity, as a Church, claims an allegiance quite incompatible with absolute sovereignty, either in the one or the many 219

Absolute sovereignty belongs only to absolute perfection, and "there is none good, save One, that is God" . 219

PAGE

And conscience is His "Aboriginal Vicar" and perpetual indefeasible representative on earth . . . 219

An essential part of the mission of Christianity is to vindicate these prerogatives of conscience . . 220

And its faithfulness to this part of its mission brought it into conflict with the French Revolution . . 220

The issue of Rousseau's doctrine is the omnipotence of the State in virtue of the Social Contract. He expressly charges Christianity with breaking up the unity of the civil polity, and claims that it is the office of the Sovereign, in every country, to fix both worship and dogma 220

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was the translation into fact of Rousseau's teaching. It was a direct negation of the Claim of Christianity to be a universal spiritual kingdom 221

The political teaching of Rousseau issues, then, in the same complete subordination of religion to the State which had been the outcome of the Lutheran and the starting point of the Anglican Reformation . . 222

And his teaching as to man's natural goodness illustrates the falsehood of extremes as signally as the teaching of Luther and Calvin that man is by nature entirely depraved 222

Lutheran and Calvinistic theologies are now of little practical influence, but the spurious individualism which lies at the root of them, as of Rousseau's doctrine, has deeply infected modern thought . 222

PAGE

The autonomy of the individual reason is now a very widely accepted first principle. Its consequences are chiefly negative. Outside the Catholic Church there are hardly any recognized first principles of thought and action 222

The apotheosis of the individual, of the State, of the race, are varying aspects of the pantheistic humanitarianism which is a vast fact of the present day . . 224

Such is the spirit of the age with which Christianity is confronted. And the Claims which it makes, through the Catholic Church, both as a universal religion and a universal polity, are precisely what they were in the beginning 224

"Through the Catholic Church": for, whatever the excellences of the communions separate from her, she alone, in fact, sustains these claims. No other body of Christians even pretends to ecumenical attributes 225

She alone judges the world in the exercise of her prophetical office 226

She cannot come to terms with, and reconcile herself to, the opinions which specially characterize the age . 227

Nor can she allow that "the best constitution of the State and civil progress require human society to be constituted and governed without regard to religion" . 227

But a fact is not altered by a hundred texts. Society *is* so constituted and governed 227

The legitimate consequence of the incompetence of the State in the matter of cults is to restore to the Church the plenitude of her sovereignty in her own domain 228

PAGE

In the exercise of that sovereignty it is inevitable that she should come into conflict with the State; for the two polities exist, side by side, for different ends, and exercise sovereignty over the same persons . . 228

For example, marriage and education are obvious occasions of conflict 229

And the difficulty is increased by the fact that the New Liberalism is, to a large extent, fanatically anti-Christian 231

The Catholic Church, then, has to maintain the Claims of Christianity in an age when Christianity is widely impugned as an idea and hated as a phenomenon. What are her prospects in fulfilling that mission? . 232

The question may be met with another. Can the world do without Christianity? 232

Belief in the supernatural is an instinct of our nature. Religion is necessary as "a vaccine against superstition" 233

The supernatural principle which the Catholic Church represents in its most concrete form is alone sufficient for the healing of the nations 234

No adequate life philosophy can be framed apart from the great spiritual truths which she teaches, and if —as is here assumed—her teaching is impregnable by physical and metaphysical science, it has the promise of the future 235

So much concerning the prospects of Christianity as an idea. But we do not live in a world of mere ideas. We live in a world of phenomena: and one of the vastest of these phenomena is Christianity as represented by the Catholic Church. What are the prospects of the Catholic Church in this new age? . 235

PAGE

Every year that passes over us brings out, more and more clearly, the essential need of a universal spiritual polity, such as the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church alone presents. . . . 236

The tendency is everywhere to strengthen the State against the individual. Nowhere, except in the Catholic Church, is an organised spiritual power, extending throughout the world, which can stand forth as the champion of the rights of conscience against the dechristianised State . . . 236

An admirable illustration of this power of resistance in the Catholic Church, is supplied by the *Kulturkampf* 238

The probability is that, in this New Age, the office of the Catholic Church in vindicating the rights of conscience, the immunities of the City of God, will be of even more importance to mankind then in the Primitive and Medieval Ages 240

But we must ever remember that it is a New Age. The old régime has vanished in the ecclesiastical as in the civil sphere 240

The intellectual conditions of life have changed as well as the political. And it is a grave question how far Catholicism has as yet responded to the needs of modern thought 243

Philosophy must expand in order to deal with the fresh problems raised by modern physics and modern metaphysics, collecting and collating the elements of truth scattered through systems the most incongruous . 246

To rear such a philosophical edifice is the great architectonic work lying before us in the order of thought 246

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE WORLD.

It is not my object, in this volume, to consider what Christianity requires men to believe and to do: or to scrutinize the grounds whereon it bases its claims as a teacher of faith and morals. I propose to regard it from what I may call a publicist's point of view, and there is a passage in St. Cyril of Jerusalem which may serve as the keynote of what I am about to write. "The Church," he says, "is called Catholic because it extends throughout all the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches catholically, and without defect, all dogmas which ought to come home to the knowledge of all men, whether concerning things visible and invisible, concerning heavenly and earthly things; and because it subjects every race to the true religion, both governors and governed, learned and unlearned; and

because it universally treats and heals every species of sins that are committed by soul and body; and because it has in possession every kind of virtue that is named, in deeds and words, and every sort of spiritual gifts."* Now the Claims of Christianity, as set forth in these words, may be reduced to two.

First, as a religion, Christianity claims to be the sole and sufficient oracle of divine truth, superseding all other modes of faith, a system of moral discipline for mankind, transforming every human relation by its remedies for sin and its incentives to goodness: the guardian of that tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. This is what Hume, in a well-known passage, has called "the intolerance of Christianity, by which it refused alliance with other religions, and insisted on reigning alone or not at all."

Secondly; Christianity is not merely an idea: it is also a phenomenon: it is not only a theology: it is also a community. It is a Church, as well as a religion: and as a Church it claims to be a universal spiritual empire. It takes man as he is, a member of a family, a member of a civil incorporation, a member of the human race, and it makes him a member of an ecclesiastical society, a character which affects him in all his other capacities. Its office is, in the words of an ancient liturgy, "to bring men into a polity in belief of the truth."

* *Catechetical Lectures*, xviii. 23.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Its Founder speaks of His kingdom over and over again: it is one of the fundamental ideas of His teaching; and a kingdom implies officers, laws, a stable organisation. His disciples are described by St. Peter, in an undoubtedly genuine epistle, as "gens sancta," a holy nation; * and however obscure the details of their earliest organisation, certain it is, if any historical fact be certain, that from the first they possessed this corporate character. Hence the ancient expressions "corpus Christianorum," τὸ ἔθνος χριστιανὸν: and St. Chrysostom speaks of the creation of this Christian people as the one miracle of Christ which no heathen opponent could gainsay.† It is not easy for us, to whom the conception of a universal Church is familiar, to understand how passing strange it must have appeared to the ages in which it was first realised: a polity perfect and complete in itself, of which the bonds were not race, language, nor local contiguity, but spiritual beliefs and affections, hopes and fears: a divine state—civitas Dei—counting its subjects in all lands, and existing side by side with secular states, of diverse regimen, with varying customs, laws, and institutions, alien from, and apt to conflict with its own: a kingdom not, indeed, of this world but in it, and so, of necessity, brought into close

* Wiesing rightly points out that the word γένος implies "eine in Lebensgemeinschaft stehende geschlossene Gesammtheit." Quoted in de Wettes' *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. iii. part i. p. 52 (3rd ed.).

† *Opera*, vol. i. p. 558 (Benedictine edition).

and constant relations with the kingdoms of this world.*

Such are, as a matter of historical fact, the Claims which Christianity has from the beginning made. The following pages will be devoted to an examination of those Claims, first as regards other competing religions, and then as affecting and affected by secular society. There are in the world two creeds besides the Christian which claim universality, Buddhism and Islām. I shall first inquire how Christianity stands in respect of these faiths. I shall next go on to contemplate the alliance made between Christianity and the secular state in that medieval public order which we call Christendom. Then I shall consider how the Claims of Christianity have been affected by the great intellectual and religious changes indicated by the words Renaissance and Reformation, which marked the downfall of that order. Lastly, I shall speak of them as they present themselves to us in this New Age, wherein our lot is cast.

* I have in my mind the following passage of St. Augustine: "Hæc ergo cœlestis civitas dum peregrinatur in terra, ex omnibus gentibus cives evocat, atque in omnibus linguis peregrinam collegit societatem; non curans quidquid in moribus, legibus, institutisque diversum est, quibus pax terrea vel conquiritur vel tenetur; nihil eorum rescindens, nec destruens, imo etiam servans ac sequens: quod licet diversum in diversis nationibus, ad unum tamen eundemque finem terrenæ pacis intenditur, si religionem qua unus summus et verus Deus colendus docetur, non impedit. Utitur ergo etiam cœlestis civitas in hac sua peregrinatione pace terrena."—*De Civitate Dei*, xix. 17.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

JUDGED by the vague and fallacious test of statistics, Buddhism must be accounted the most prevailing of the world's religions. Berghaus reckons some 500,000,000—a third of the human race—as professing it, while Christians of all sorts are set down by this eminent authority at 327,000,000, and the votaries of Islām at 155,000,000. But in this calculation all the inhabitants of China are counted as Buddhists. So they may be, in a sense. Sir Alfred Lyall has pointed out that "whereas in other countries the chief religion is one but the interpretations of it are many, so that the faith is a moral system, a mysterious revelation or a simple form of propitiating the supernatural, according to each man's feelings or habits of thought, in China a man may go to different religions, for specialities of various sides or phases of belief;" whence it comes to pass that "three modes of worship, and three philosophies, are found side by side, not only in the same locality, but in the belief of the same

individuals." * Or, as Dr. Edkins puts it tersely, "The Chinese believe in three religions at once." † But however large the number of professors of the Buddhist faith, few persons, I take it, would seriously maintain that Buddhism is really an effective rival to the ecumenical Claims of Christianity; and those few hardly merit a serious reply. ‡ Great as may be our admiration for the noble figure of Gotama — surely one of the purest and most winning in all history—it is perfectly clear that his religion is decadent, nay, moribund. The chief tests of the vitality of a creed are its fidelity to its original idea and its power of propagation. Those are the true criteria "stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ." Now certain it is that the noblest elements of the Buddha's teaching have long been buried under childish fables, and that the missionary activity of his religion is extinct.

There is, however, another point of view from which Buddhism certainly does seem entitled to consideration in this volume. It is asserted that Christianity is largely plagiarized from that older religion: that the obligations of the Gospel of

* *Asiatic Studies*, pp. 131 and 130. The three religions are, of course, Confucianism, Tāoism, and Buddhism.

† *Religion in China*, p. 58.

‡ No doubt the pessimistic doctrines of Buddhism have largely influenced Western philosophic thought from the time of Schopenhauer. But I have here in view the eccentric sect, of American origin, which is by way of professing a Buddhist or pseudo-Buddhist religion.

Christ to the Gospel of Gotama are beyond dispute. Thus we are told by M. Émile Burnouf—who, if not himself of much authority in Oriental studies, bears the name of one who certainly was so—that "the details of the Buddhist legend were applied to Jesus during his life and after his death": that "the doctrine of the Incarnation is borrowed from Buddhism, while the Ascension recalls Nirvāna": that only "at Nicæa did the Christain faith officially break with Buddhism": and that even in the creed named after the Council held at that place "may be found the development of the formula 'The Buddha, the Law, and the Church.'" I must refer to M. Émile Burnouf's own pages those who desire to follow him in what I take leave to call the entirely unsuccessful and hardly intelligible argument* whereby he attempts to establish these assertions. I quote him here merely as the exponent, in an influential and largely read publication, of a view somewhat widely, if somewhat hazily, held. Now it is manifest that if this view were true, the historical character of the Evangelical narrative could no longer be maintained. And assuredly the Claims of Christianity are inseparably bound up with the

* In his article "Le Bouddhisme en Occident": *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 15, 1888. Whatever there is in this paper worth answering had been answered by anticipation in Dr. Estlin Carpenter's very learned and most able essay, "The New Testament and Buddhism," published in *the Nineteenth Century*, of December, 1880. I shall refer to it later on.

historical character of that narrative. Goethe has somewhere remarked, with entire truth, that the religion of Jesus Christ depends upon the personality of Jesus Christ. What I shall proceed to do in this Chapter is first to set forth the Buddhist Gospel in its essential features; and secondly to leave the discussion of the question which has arisen regarding the analogies between it and the Christian Gospel, to two authorities whose words will carry weight that cannot possibly attach to mine: Cardinal Newman, whom I take to be the most considerable spokesman for the Christian religion in these latter days, and Mr. Rhys Davids, who is certainly the greatest living authority on primitive Buddhism.*

(I.) The Buddhist Gospel.†

The birth ‡ of the Buddha was on this wise. There reigned in the city of Kapilavastu, in the Rajpoot country, over the Aryan people called Śākyas, a king named Suddhodana. For many years his two

* Mr. Rhys Davids kindly permits me to publish his two letters. For permission to publish Cardinal Newman's two, I am indebted to the courtesy of the Rev. Father Neville, of the Birmingham Oratory, the Cardinal's literary executor.

† In order to avoid a multitude of references, it may suffice to say that the statements given in this narrative are all taken from authoritative Buddhist texts—chiefly those published in *The Sacred Books of the East* and in Trübner's *Oriental Series*. I am permitted to add that Mr. Rhys Davids finds the narrative correct.

‡ It took place, most probably, about six hundred years before Christ.

wives bore him neither son nor daughter. Then, the elder of them, Māyā, found herself with child. But it was of no earthly father that the holy thing which should be born of her was begotten. During countless previous existences* a Great Being had exercised in the highest degree the ten virtues, the five renouncings, and the three mighty works of perfection, in the hope of reaching omniscience for the salvation of mankind. And now the fulness of the time was come for him to descend from his high estate in the Tusita heaven, for the redemption of the world from sin and sorrow, by attaining the sublime dignity of Buddhahood.† The virtues of the glorious princess, Māyā, who, during a hundred thousand worlds, had lived in the practice of righteousness, keeping with a perfect heart all the rules and observances of the law, merited for her the great office of his mother. In a dream she beheld him under the figure of a white elephant, open her right side and conceal himself in her bosom, and the Brahmins to whom she told the vision interpreted it that she should bear a son

* Five hundred and ten of these former existences are narrated in the Buddhist Scriptures. "They range," says Bishop Bigandet, "through the whole series of the animal kingdom, from the dove to the elephant."—*Life or Legend of Gaudama*, vol. i. p. 47, note.

† Buddha is not, strictly speaking, a proper name, but a title, meaning the Perfectly Enlightened One. Twenty-five previous Buddhas are supposed to have appeared in this world. The term Sakya-Muni means Sage of the Nation of the Sakyas, and is one of the many epithets given by his followers to the Buddha of the present era. "His family name was certainly Gotama," Mr. Rhys Davids says (*Buddhism*, p. 27), in Burmese, Gaudama. Following the best Oriental authorities, I shall here speak of him as Siddhārtha until he attains the Buddhaship, after that as the Buddha.

who should be a Mighty Ruler, and of whose kingdom there should be no end. When her time drew near, she set out, according to the custom of her race, for her father's house, and while she was journeying thither her days were accomplished, and in the shade of a grove of satin trees she brought forth her son. The Blessed Child left his mother's womb with his feet and hands stretched out, his countenance as that of a Pundit descending from a place where he has expounded the law. And all marvelled when he freed himself from the hands of those who ministered to him; and then, looking East and West, North and South, throughout the universe, present to the eye of his perfect reason, like a level plain, he exclaimed, "This is my last birth: there shall be to me no other state of existence: I am the greatest of all beings." On that day the choirs of gods* in the Tāvatinsa heaven were astonished and joyful, and waved their robes in exultation, saying: "In Kapilavastu, to Suddhodana the King, this day a son is born, who seated under the Bo-tree, will become a Buddha. He shall bring joy and peace to men, he shall shed light in the dark places, and shall give sight to the blind."

At that time an ascetic, Kāla Devala by name, a counseller much honoured by Suddhodana the King,

* It may not be superfluous to point out that Buddhism does not possess the conception of the Supreme Creative Personal God, so familiar to us. The place that this conception fills in Monotheism is held in the Buddhist system by the moral order of the universe: a Supremely Just and Perfect Law ruling absolutely throughout the three worlds. Nor does Buddhism recognise specific differences between living beings, any of whom may be a man in one existence, a beast in another, a god in a third, a fish in a fourth; and so *ad infinitum*. Differing from Mr. Rhys Davids, I venture to think "god" a better rendering than "angel" of the word *deva*.

had eaten his midday meal, and had gone to the Tāvatinsa heaven to rest during the heat of the day. As he sat there, resting, he saw these gods rejoicing, and asked them, "Why do ye thus rejoice and are glad at heart? Make known to me the cause." They answered, "Sir, to Suddhodana the King, is born a son, who seated under the Bo-tree, will become a Buddha, and will found a Kingdom of Righteousness. To us it will be given to see his infinite grace and to hear his word. Therefore do we rejoice and are glad."

The ascetic, hearing these words, came down quickly from the Tāvatinsa heaven, and, entering the King's house, sat down on the seat appointed for him, and said, "A son, they say, is born to you, O King! let me see him." The King ordered his son to be clad in beautiful garments and brought in to salute Kāla Devala. But the future Buddha turned his feet round and planted them on the matted hair * of the ascetic. Then the ascetic did homage to the Buddha, and the King, seeing the wonder, also did homage to his own son.

Now, Kāla Devala had the power of calling to mind the events of forty ages in the past and of forty ages in the future. Looking at the marks of prosperity on the Child's body, he considered with himself: "Will he become a Buddha, or not?" And, perceiving that he would most certainly become a Buddha, he smiled, saying: "This is a most wonderful child." Then reflecting: "What

* It was considered among the Brahmins a sign of sanctity to wear matted or plaited hair. This is referred to in one of the Buddhist Scriptures: "What is the use of plaited hair, O fool? What of a garment of skin? Your low yearnings are within you, and the outside thou makest clean."—*Dhammapada*, v. 394.

happiness shall result from the birth of this child! The time of my departure is close at hand. Will it be given to me to behold him when he has become a Buddha?" he perceived that it would not. "Dying before that time, I shall be re-born in the Formless World. And it will not be my good fortune to behold this wonderful child when he has become a Buddha. Great indeed is my loss." And he wept sore. Then reflecting: "Will it be granted to any one of my kinsmen to see him as a Buddha?" he saw that it would be granted to his nephew Nālaka. So he went straightway to his sister's house, and said, "Where is your son Nālaka?" And she said, "In the house, brother." And he said, "Call him." And when the young man came forth, he said, "To Suddhodana the King a son is born, who, after thirty-five years, will become a Buddha. To you it will be given to see him. This very day forsake the world." And Nālaka believed the word which his uncle spoke, and forsook all, and put on the robe of a religious mendicant, and went to the Himālaya Mountains, and lived the life of a monk.

Now, when the Blessed Child was born into the world, there were born at the same time with him the beautiful woman Yasodharā, who was to be his wife; Ananda also, his cousin, who was to be his beloved disciple and evangelist; the horse, Kantika, who was to bear him away from the pomps and vanities of this evil world, when the time appointed had come for the Great Renunciation; and the nobleman Channa, his faithful friend, who should be the companion and confidant of his flight. On the fifth day, the Brahmins most versed in the science of astrology assembled for the ceremony of washing the child's head and giving him a name. Divining his future destiny as the Deliverer of man

from the changes and troubles of existence, they called him Siddhārtha, which, being interpreted, is, "The Establisher."* Two days afterwards his mother, Māyā, died, not from any ill effect of that pure and painless birth, but because her appointed term was accomplished and her hour had come; for the womb in which a future Buddha has dwelt, like a sacred shrine, can never be dwelt in by another.

The sister of Māyā, King Suddhodana's second wife, took charge of the Blessed Child. He grew in wisdom and stature: he taught his teachers. It had been foretold to his father that he should renounce the world, and these four signs were given: An Old Man, a Sick Man, a Dead Man, and a Monk. The King thought: "From this time forth let no such things come near my son. There is no good of my son's becoming a Buddha. I should like to see him exercising sovereignty and rule:" and gave orders that none of these fatal signs should ever meet his eye. The child grew up amid the pomp of the King's palace, and when he was sixteen years of age he took to wife his cousin Yasodharā. His father then ordered three palaces to be built for him, one for each season of the year: and innumerable damsels, skilful in playing upon all sorts of instruments, ever attended upon him, and charmed all his moments by uninterrupted dances and music. His kinsmen, seeing him devoted to the pleasures of home life, complained to the King that he neglected the acquisition of attainments proper for his station. When his father made known to him this complaint he said: "Let proclamation be made by beat of drum in all the land that on such a day I will show to my kinsmen, in the presence of the most learned

* Or rather, perhaps, The Accomplisher of the Aim.

doctors, my full acquaintance with the eighteen kinds of arts and sciences." On the appointed day he displayed the extent of his knowledge, and they weresatisfied and their doubts removed.

Now, when the future Buddha was in his twenty-ninth year, the gods who ministered to him unseen thought: "The time for young Siddhārtha to attain enlightenment is near. Let us place before him the appointed signs." On a certain day he ascended his chariot to drive to his pleasure gardens, when he discovered a figure with body bent, with teeth decayed, with hair grey, with skin shrivelled, with limbs trembling, and supported by a staff. Then he asked his charioteer, "What manner of man is this, whose very hair is not like that of other men?" And the charioteer answered, "O Prince, he is an Old Man: everyone who is born is appointed to become like unto him." When he heard this he said, "Birth, then, must be a great evil, if it conducts beings to so wretched a condition." And, with agitated heart, he turned back and went to his palace. Again, one day, as he was driving to his pleasure gardens, he saw a figure emaciated, weak, with faculties impaired, whose body was filled with a sore disease. Siddhārtha inquired concerning him of his charioteer, who told him it was a Sick Man, and when he received the answer he went back to his palace with agitated heart. Once more, as he was driving to his pleasure gardens, he met something wrapped in many-coloured stuffs, and borne on a litter, amid burning torches and the wailing of women. He inquired concerning it of his charioteer, and when he received answer that it was a Dead Man, and that to this state all must come, he went back to his palace with agitated heart. Last of all, as he was driving to his pleasure gardens, he met a mendicant friar, shaven and shorn, of humble mien

and sweet aspect, bearing an alms-bowl, and going from door to door. And words were put into the mouth of the charioteer to declare the merits and dignity of the religious profession. Siddhārtha straightway desired to embrace it.

He went apart to a garden by the riverside to meditate. There a messenger came to him, bringing tidings that Yasodharā had brought forth a son. "That child," he said, "is a new and strong tie, which I must now break." He ascended his chariot and returned to the city, where the streets were thronged with a multitude rejoicing over the new-born prince. At that time a noble virgin, Kisā Gotamī by name, had gone to the flat roof of the upper storey of her palace, whence she beheld the beauty and majesty of Siddhārtha as he went through the city. Then her heart was filled with delight, and she lifted up her voice and sang:

> "Blessed, indeed, is that mother,
> Blessed, indeed, is that father,
> Blessed, indeed, is that wife,
> Who owns this lord so glorious."

And when he heard this, Siddhārtha thought to himself: "On seeing such a one the heart of his mother is made happy, the heart of his father is made happy, the heart of his wife is made happy! This is all she says. But by what can every heart attain to lasting happiness and peace?" And to his mind, estranged from sin, the answer came: "When the fire of lust is gone out, then peace is gained; when the fires of hatred and delusion are gone out, then peace is gained; when the troubles of mind arising from pride, credulity, and other sins, have ceased, then peace is gained! Sweet is the lesson this singer makes me hear, for the Nirvāna of Peace is that which I have been trying

to find out. This very day I will break away from household cares. I will renounce the world. I will follow after only the Nirvāna itself." Then, taking from his neck a string of pearls, he sent it to Kisā Gotamī as a teacher's fee. Delighted, she thought: "Prince Siddhārtha has fallen in love with me, and has sent me a present."

Siddhārtha entered his palace and reclined upon his couch. Then there came before him his nautch girls, clad in beautiful garments, and lovely as heavenly virgins, and, ranging themselves in order, they danced and sang. But, his heart being estranged from sin, he took no pleasure in them, and fell asleep. Then the women said to themselves: "He, for whose sake we were performing, is asleep. Why should we play any longer?" And they laid aside their instruments and slept. A little before midnight Siddhārtha awoke, and sat cross-legged on the couch, and he looked on the damsels, with their tinkling ornaments laid aside, as they slept; some foaming at the mouth, some grinding their teeth, some yawning, some muttering in their sleep, some with their garments in disorder. Seeing this woful change in their appearance, he became more and more disgusted with lusts, and the chamber was to him a charnel house full of loathsome corpses. Life, whether in the world subject to passion, or in the world of form, or in the formless worlds, appeared to him like staying in a house that had become the prey of devouring flames. He said: "It all oppresses me; it is intolerable." His mind turned ardently to the state of those who have renounced the world; and he resolved on that very day to accomplish "The Great Renunciation."

He went to the door, and found there his chamberlain Channa. "Rise up quickly," he said

to him. "I am now ready to leave the world and retire to the desert; go and prepare the swiftest of my horses." Channa went straightway, as his lord commanded him, and saddled the mighty steed, Kantika. The horse, knowing the intentions of the Prince, testified his inexpressible joy by loud neighing, but the gods hushed the sound, so that none heard it.

Now, while Channa was making ready for their departure, Siddhārtha thought: "I will just look on my son"; and he went to the room where his wife lay. The mother was sleeping, having one of her hands placed over the head of her babe. "If I lift her hand to take my son," he said to himself, "she will awake, and that will prevent my going away. I will come back and see him when I have become a Buddha." And when he had left the palace, he went to his horse and said, "O Kantika, do thou save me this once to-night, so that I, having become a Buddha by your help, may save the world of men, and the world of gods too." Then he mounted him, and Channa followed. The great gate of the city, which a thousand men could hardly turn, opened to them of its own accord, and they rode away into the darkness. Scarcely had he left the city when Māra,* the spirit of evil, met him, and endeavoured to turn him back, promising him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Siddhārtha answered, "I want not an earthly kingdom: depart; I will become a Buddha, and make the ten-thousand-world system shout for joy." Then that Wicked One left him for a season, but ever

* My friend, Professor Sayce, points out to me that Māra is still with us in the Western World. We have him in the English *Nightmare*, and in the French *Cauchemar*.

watched him, striving to throw every obstacle in his path, pursuing him like a shadow that follows the object from which it falls. Siddhārtha rode through the night, until he reached the banks of the river Anomā, and there he took off his rich habit, with his sword cut off the long hair which adorned his comely head, and, putting on the dress of a religious mendicant, bade Channa take back the horse Kantika to his father and tell the King the things which he had seen. But Kantika, hearing these words, and thinking, "From this time forth I shall never see my master any more," was unable to bear his grief. And, going out of their sight, he died of a broken heart, and was re-born in the Tāvatinsa heaven as a god.*

Six years did Siddhārtha abide in the desert of Umvēli, performing the uttermost penance, until he was wasted to a shadow. There abode with him Kondanya and four other monks. And his fame went abroad, as when the sound of a great bell is heard in the sky. Then he perceived that penance is not the way to Wisdom, and, taking up his mendicant's bowl, he went to the neighbouring village to beg food. When he had eaten it, he received strength, but the five ascetics who had continued with him in the desert were offended, and forsook him. Alone he went to the banks of the Nairanjara, and sat down to meditate under the Bo-tree. There did the Prince of the Power of the Air make an assault upon him,

* "The various accounts that are given of this horse, Kantika," says Bishop Bigandet, "and the grief he feels at parting with his master, may appear somewhat extraordinary, puerile, and ridiculous to everyone except to Buddhists. The great principle of that religious system is that man does not differ from animals [or gods] in nature, but only in relative perfection."—*Life or Legend of Gaudama*, vol. i. p. 66, note.

with all his hosts. When the conflict began between the Saviour of the World and the Evil One, a thousand appalling meteors fell: clouds and darkness prevailed. Even the earth, with the oceans and mountains it contains, though it is unconscious, quaked like a conscious being; like a fond bride when forcibly torn from her bridegroom; like the festoons of a vine, shaking under the blast of a whirlwind. The ocean rose under the vibration of this earthquake; rivers flowed back towards their sources; peaks of lofty mountains rolled crumbling to the earth; and a fierce storm howled all around. The roar of the concussion became terrible. The very sun enveloped itself in awful darkness, and a host of headless spirits filled the air. Siddhārtha sat with heart untroubled, and by the merits gained in his previous existences, triumphed over the Enemy of Mankind. Even the famous charger of Māra bent his knees before the Deliverer, and that Wicked One fled away. It was a little before sunset that the Great Being thus put to flight the powers of evil. At that time he was wrapped in the profoundest meditation. Then, whilst the Bo-tree paid him homage, as it were, by its shoots, like sprigs of red coral, falling over his robe, he acquired in the first watch of the night the Knowledge of the Past, in the middle watch the Knowledge of the Present, and in the third watch the Knowledge of the Chain of Causation which leads to the Origin of Evil.

Now, the chain is this: Old Age and Death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair spring from Birth; Birth springs from Existence; Existence springs from Attachment;* Attachment

* Upādāna: the combining of affections calculated to bring into existence.

springs from Desire; Desire springs from Sensation: Sensation springs from Contact; Contact springs from the Six Senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, the palpable body, and the impalpable mind: the Senses spring from Name-and-Form; Name-and-Form spring from Consciousness; Consciousness springs from the Mental and Moral Predisposition: which are illusions springing from Ignorance. Not to know suffering, not to know the cause of suffering, not to know the cessation of suffering, not to know the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering—this is Ignorance. Having followed in his mind the succession of the twelve causes and effects, and reached the last link of that chain, Siddhārtha said to himself: "Ignorance is the first cause which gives rise to all the phenomena I have successively reviewed. From it springs the world and all the beings it contains. It is the cause of that universal illusion in which man and all beings are miserably lulled. By what means can this ignorance be done away with? Doubtless by knowledge. The knowledge of the Four Great Truths is the true light that can dispel ignorance and procure the real science, whereby the coming out from the whirlpool of existences, or from the state of illusion, can be perfectly effected. These four truths are: I. The miseries inseparable from existence; II. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire, ever renewed, never accomplished, of pleasure, of existence, of prosperity; III. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging oneself from it, is the principal thing, deserving the most serious attention; IV. The means of obtaining the individual annihilation of that desire is supplied solely by the Eight Paths of Holiness: right views: right feelings; right words; right behaviour; right mode of livelihood; right exertion; right memory;

right meditation and tranquillity. This is the Noble Eightfold Path, which opens the eyes, which bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to Nirvāna." It was then that the heart of Siddhārtha acquired an unshakeable firmness, a perfect purity or exemption from all passions, an unalterable meekness, and a strong feeling of tender compassion towards all beings. Urged by the merciful and compassionate dispositions of his soul, Siddhārtha said to himself: "All is misery and affliction in this world; all beings are miserably detained in the vortex of existences; they float over the whirlpool of desire and concupiscence; they are carried to and fro by the deceitful cravings of a never-obtained satisfaction. They must be taught to put an end to desire by freeing themselves from its influence. Their minds must be imbued with the knowledge of the Four Great Truths. The Noble Eightfold Path that I have discovered inevitably leads men and gods to that most desirable end. This Path ought to be pointed out to them, that by following it men and gods may obtain their deliverance."

Whilst these thoughts thronged through his mind, a little before break of day, did he attain to the full insight of that wisdom that is unsurpassed in heaven or earth, among gods or men. The emancipation of his heart was established. He became the Buddha. When this great wonder took place the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the captives were freed from their chains and restored to liberty: and innumerable other miracles were wrought. Moreover the Buddha was transfigured and his body shone like the light.

Seven times seven days did the Buddha then

spend, enjoying the bliss of emancipation: in the solitude of him who is full of gladness, who sees the Truth, who is free from malice, who is self-restrained towards all beings that have life, who is delivered from lust in this world, who has got beyond desires, who has put away that pride which comes from the thought "I am." The Blessed One said to himself, "With great pains have I acquired this doctrine: why should I now preach it? This doctrine will not be easy to understand, to beings that are lost in lust and hatred." When the Blessed One pondered these things, his mind became inclined to remain in quiet and not to preach the doctrine. Then Brahma Sahampati, the chief of the gods, understanding, from the power of his mind, the reflection which had occurred in the mind of the Blessed One, appeared before the Blessed One, and, putting his right knee on the ground, raised his joined hands towards the Blessed One, and said: "Lord, may the Blessed One preach the doctrine! may the Perfect One preach the doctrine! there are beings whose mental eyes are darkened by scarcely any lust; but if they do not hear the doctrine they cannot attain salvation. These will understand the doctrine." And the Blessed One granted the request of Brahma Sahampati.

Then the Blessed One thought, "To whom shall I preach the doctrine first? What if I were to preach the doctrine first to the five monks who continued with me in the desert?" And the Blessed One, seeing, by the power of his divine clear vision, that these five monks were living at Benares, in the Deer Park, went forth to Benares. There did he preach to them his law, and they gave ear, and fixed their mind on the knowledge that he imparted to them, and believed on him.

Thus did the Blessed One set up his Kingdom of Righteousness.

And this is the doctrine of the Buddha. A man is what he does. His works are his true self. Of these is made his Karma. These drop from him at death. His Karma remains. According to it is he re-born, in heaven, on earth, or in hell. What we are, is the fruit of the deeds done in our former births. What we shall be, will be the fruit of the deeds which we now do. Two things are immutably fixed: that good actions bring happiness, and that bad actions bring misery. We pass away according to our works. The cause of sin and sorrow is desire: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. To root out desire is the only way of escaping from the evil which is of the essence of existence: of deliverance from the yawning gulf of perpetual birth and death. For everywhere death reigns. There is no rest in either of the three worlds. The gods, indeed, enjoy a period of bliss. But their happiness must also end, for it is appointed unto them to die. To consider this as the end of being, that there is nothing born but must die, and therefore to aim at escaping birth and death—this is to exercise oneself in religious truth. Scrupulously to avoid all wicked actions, reverently to perform all virtuous ones, ever to purify our intentions from selfish ends —this is the doctrine of all the Buddhas. Thus does a man conquer himself, and when he has conquered himself, and desire is extinct, he hath ceased from sin, there is no further ground for rebirth. This is the peace that they have who love the law of the Buddha: and them even the gods envy.

Forty and five years did the Buddha go up and down the country round about the Ganges, preach-

ing the Noble Eightfold Path, whereby we are delivered from the tyranny of desire and obtain Nirvāna; receiving all that came to him, but seeking specially the poor, the distressed, the sinful. Then, perceiving that the hour of his departure had come, he spoke these words to Ananda, his beloved disciple: "O Ananda, do not let yourself be troubled. Do not weep. Have I not told you that we must part from all we hold most dear and pleasant? No being soever, born or put together, can overcome the dissolution inherent in it, no such conditions can exist. For a long time, Ananda, you have been very near to me by kindness, in act and word, and thoughtfulness. You have always done well. Persevere, and you too shall be quite free from this thirst of life, this chain of ignorance." Then the Blessed One turned to the other disciples, and said: "Behold, now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence." This was the last word of the Buddha.

(II.) Copying or Coincidence?

The parallelisms between this narrative and the Evangelical history, cannot have escaped the most careless reader. And they might be largely multiplied if the life and work of the Buddha were described in greater detail. For example, the Buddha, like the Founder of Christianity, preaches a Sermon on the Mount, sends forth his disciples by two and two to teach what they had learnt from him, and appeases the jealousy that arises among them when one is privileged to sit on his right hand and another on his left. The teaching

of both is marked by the same insistence on self-sacrifice, on inward purity, on universal charity, and is illustrated by like similitudes and parables.* What is the explanation? The question attracted the attention of Cardinal—then Dr.—Newman, and he addressed to me the following letter concerning it:

May 2, 1882.

I have been much interested in your able and learned article in the *Nineteenth Century*, but am startled at your granting so much to Buddhism. The following questions suggest themselves:

1. Did not Buddha live about five centuries before the Christian era?

2. How far are the notices of him contemporary, and what part of his history and biography do they cover?

3. Are they MSS. documents, or inscriptions, and contemporary with him, or at least with a known relation of time to him?

4. Or are they simply traditional, from mouth to mouth, generation after generation?

5. Can they be satisfactorily fixed, in the details which you and other writers give of them, to a date prior to the spread of Nestorianism in the East, say the middle of the fifth century, or came before the date of the probable apostolic teaching, *e.g.* St. Thomas's?

You will understand from the above what my difficulty is, without my asking a treatise from you.

* Thus the parables of the sower, of the house which could not resist the storm, and of the treasure hid in a field, bear a striking resemblance to passages in the *Dhammapada*.

In reply to these questions I said that the Buddha certainly lived before the birth of Christ —probably five or six centuries before it; that there are no contemporary notices of him; that the oldest Buddhist documents we have are the three Pāli Pitakas—literally Baskets—which, in the opinion of the best authorities, received their present form at about the beginning of the Christian era, but were not reduced to writing for two or three centuries afterwards. I added: "It was not until the third century B.C. that Buddhism was introduced into Ceylon by missionaries whom Asoka, King of Megadha, sent to that island. Thence it was propagated to Burma and Siam. It is from these three countries that we derive our knowledge of its original form. It became a tolerated religion in China during the fourth century of our era, suffering, however, considerable changes in its introduction into that empire. Three or four centuries later—the precise date, I understand, cannot be fixed—it was received by the people of Thibet, and transformed into the shape in which it now exists among them. The whole subject of the relations between Buddhism and Christianity has been discussed by Dr. Estlin Carpenter in a very learned article, contributed by him to the *Nineteenth Century* of December, 1880. I send it herewith. As you will see, he maintains that 'no clue has, as yet, turned up which may serve, in any way, to connect Christianity with Buddhism,

and he points out, what is of course undeniable, that 'they are different systems of thought and life.' The conclusion he arrives at is that 'humanity produced, independently, the two careers of Gotama Buddha and Jesus Christ.' I should like to show your questions, if I may—and I will presume that I may unless you tell me not—to my friend Mr. Rhys Davids, who, I should say, is far and away the most competent man living to answer them."

I accordingly put Cardinal Newman's questions before Mr. Rhys Davids, and received from him the following letter:—

May 2 1882.

The questions of your revered correspondent raise the most important, and at the same time the most difficult problems in the history of Buddhism. The oldest evidence we have is contained (α) in the Pāli Pitakas, (β) in the Asoka inscriptions, and the Bārhut and other bas-reliefs. The former (with the exception of some supplementary portions already sufficiently ascertained and forming a very small proportion of the whole) date, in the unanimous opinion of Pāli scholars, within one hundred and fifty years of the Buddha's death. And they contain a number of older documents, some of them preserved in their entirety, which belong to the very earliest portion of that period of one hundred and fifty years. These oldest documents are alone amply sufficient to show what were the principal points in Gotama's system of ethics and in the regulations of his Order of Recluses.

The stone records are firstly as regards the edicts of the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka, within a few years of 250 B.C.; and secondly as regards the extensive series of bas-reliefs, about fifty years later. They show what occupied the minds of Buddhists of the third century B.C., and confirm the older details in the Pāli Scriptures. The very numerous illustrations of the Buddhist legend still preserved to us on these stones show that it existed practically in its entirety at that early date. And the date of Asoka is fixed not only by Indian chronology, but also by the evidence of contemporary Greek writers.

The MSS. have been handed down in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, and there being no Pāli alphabet in common use in those countries, they are written in the different alphabets in use there. One consequence of this is that it is comparatively easy to ascertain the right original readings. But the books so written were not at first written at all. They were committed to MSS. in the first century A.D. Up to that time they were handed down in the order by members of the order whose duty it was to learn them by heart. This is not mere tradition. There is all the difference between stories or sermons being handed on from one man to another without any special importance being attached to the form in which they were related; and stories or sermons the very words of which, and of commentaries upon them, were regarded as sacred, being learnt by heart, and handed down word for word. And we have evidence of the accuracy with which the early Buddhists thus transmitted their sacred books—(*a*) in the fact that they have preserved the exact words of the oldest documents to which I have referred, even when those words contained opinions which were

no longer accepted by those who transmitted them; and (β) in the fact that those oldest documents as still extant contain no reference to disputes—as important in the history of Buddhism as the Arian controversy in the history of Christianity—which arose about 300 B.C. It would be impossible to set out these points in a letter. But even if we place no reliance upon the accuracy of this verbal transmission, and accept therefore the Pāli Scriptures as evidence only of Buddhist belief when these Scriptures were actually written, that is enough to show that there can have been no borrowing from Nestorian or other Christian teachers. No one supposes that the Nestorians had penetrated into Ceylon in the year 88 B.C. As to the authenticity of the records on stone there is no doubt, and though the chain of reasoning in the case of the Pāli MSS. will always seem weak to the lay mind, it is one that appeals convincingly to critical scholars. The details of this chain of evidence are set out in the introduction to the translation of the Vinaya Texts by Professor Oldenberg and myself, now being published for the University of Oxford. I am afraid the results stated without the details will seem to be very meagre and not very certain. But if the notes I have been able to put together should be of any service to you, I shall be more than compensated.

Cardinal Newman, to whom I forwarded the foregoing letter, returned it with these remarks:—

May 10, 1882.

Many thanks for the letter of Mr. Rhys Davids, which I herewith return. I have opened so large a question, that it is no wonder that he has not hit

the points which constitute my difficulty in the matter.

Dr. Carpenter says, "It is not the Fourth Gospel only which has drawn upon itself the suspicion of not being a native product of the Palestinian soil."

He goes on to say that the resemblance in life and teaching between Buddha and "The Galilean Prophet" is, at first sight, so close as to have given rise to the crude suggestion "that the later is but the reproduction of the earlier." He says the facts of history do not allow of this explanation of the coincidence, but he allows the coincidence itself and he accounts for it by the "pious fancy of Buddhist disciples," leaving it apparently to be inferred that to the pious fancies of Christian disciples was owing the other side of the parallel. But I cannot follow him in this solution of the difficulty. The coincidence of biographical notices in the memoirs severally of our Lord and of Buddha is so close and so minute, that it seems to me plain that the record of our Lord's life, our written Gospel is taken from biographies of Buddha, or the biographies of Buddha from Christian sources. I am, then, naturally led to ask: What is the trustworthiness of the account of the life and actions of Buddha, as contained in Dr. Carpenter's article?

Now what is the coincidence which I think so startling? Not the mere claim to a supernatural sanction. A divine birth, a gift of miracles, an heroic life, a great success, are the claims historically of every great moral teacher and social reformer. Nor again is there a difficulty in a close resemblance in the accounts left us of the ethical code promulgated by our Lord and Buddha. There is little in the ethics of Christianity which the human mind

may not reach by its natural powers, and which, here and there, in the instance of individuals, great poets, and great philosophers, has not in fact been anticipated. It is not this which I want explained, but it is the series of details wrought into the life of Buddha, so parallel to that which we find in the Gospels, it is this which leads me to ask for the authority on which it is reported to me, and on first hearing to meet it with deep suspicion of its untrustworthiness, and to ask whether it is not posterior to Christianity and referable to Christian teaching.

For instance, I am told that Buddha came on earth with the object of "redeeming the world": that he "voluntarily descended from his high estate"; that his descent was the last of a series of "incarnations" with one object from first to last of delivering mankind "from sin and sorrow": that he became incarnate in a married woman; that he was born when his mother was journeying to her paternal home: that, on its taking place, the gods in the heavens sang, "This day a son is born" to "give joy and peace to men, to shed light in the dark places," and to "give sight to the blind." When the child was presented to his father, an aged saint wept as he predicted his future greatness, saying, "What happiness shall ensue from the birth of this child. My time of departure is close at hand." He had the name of the "Establisher"; "he grew in wisdom and stature: he taught his teachers." The Tempter appeared and promised him universal sovereignty; but he replied, "I want not an earthly kingdom, depart!" On his attaining Buddhahood there followed miracles: "the blind saw, the deaf heard, the lame walked, and the captives were restored to liberty," he himself was "transfigured," &c., &c.

Now, what is the authority, what the evidence for all this?

Buddha came "to *redeem* the world": (we must keep to the very words; else, there will be no difficulty to be solved). Then I ask, who told us this? The Gospels were written, say ten, or twenty, suppose fifty or one hundred years after the events they record, and are separate witnesses for those events:—is the Buddhist Gospel as near the time of Buddha as the Christian to Christ? Who tells us that the gods sang on Buddha's birth and proclaimed peace to men? Who were the witnesses or at least the reporters of the fact of Buddha's fight with the Tempter? To prove the authenticity and the date of one of our Gospels, we are plunged into a maze of MSS. of various dates and families, of various and patristic testimonies and quotations, and to satisfy the severity of our critics, there must be an absolute coincidence of text and concordance of statement in these various MSS. put forward as evidence. If a particular passage is not found in all discoverable MSS., it is condemned. There are MSS. of St. John which omit the account of the Angel of Bethesda, as it stands in his fifth chapter; accordingly the exegetical lecturer thinks himself at liberty to disbelieve the narrative. The termination of St. Mark is wanting in other MSS.; in consequence, as if this omission was an actual disproof of its authenticity, a critic expresses his gratification that we are no longer bound by the text, "He that believeth not," &c. And in vain are the "Three Witnesses" found in the Latin text of St. John's first Epistle; it is fatal to their reception that they are not found in the Greek. Why are we not to ask for evidence parellel to this before we receive the history of Buddha? Perhaps you will answer, But he lived so long ago; how can you expect a contemporary life of one who

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

lived in the days of Darius Hystaspes? True, but I remark that the mere absence of evidence is not itself evidence; may it not rather be urged from the parallel of Roman history, that the absence of historical evidence is the sure forerunner and token of myths?

There is nothing producible, as far as has been brought home to me, to show that the words and deeds and history attributed to Buddha form a whole, such as the Gospels, and existed *in detail* for earlier than one thousand years after Buddha; nothing to show that the passages in the Buddhist books which are now received do not belong to Christian sources; nothing to show that the very best reason for thinking that they were in existence as early as seven or eight hundred years after Buddha is the fact of Christianity having spread through the East by that time, as the Aristotelian Saracens and Moors in the Middle Ages are a proof of their influence on the Catholic Schoolmen. There is more evidence that Christianity influenced the Buddhist traditions than that the history of Buddha, as now reported, existed as it now exists before the Christian era.

I write this as an empirical view, as a case which has to be investigated. I am quite unlearned in the subject, but I want to know whether my question can be satisfactorily answered. I do not of course deny the singular greatness of Buddha; it is the details of his history which I am sceptical about. Meanwhile, in order to prove that my belief in the influence of Christianity in the East in our first centuries is not unwarranted, I quote the following passage from Gibbon about the Nestorians:—

"From the conquest of Persia, they carried their spiritual arms to the north, the east, and the south; and the simplicity of the Gospel was fashioned and painted with the colours of

the Syriac theology. In the sixth century, according to the report of a Nestorian traveller, Christianity was successfully preached to the Bactrians, the Huns, the Persians, the Indians, the Persarmenians, the Medes, and the Elamites. The Barbaric Churches, from the Gulf of Persia to the Caspian Sea, were almost infinite; and their recent faith was conspicuous in the number and sanctity of their monks and martyrs. The pepper coast of Malabar and the isles of the ocean, Socotra and Ceylon, were peopled with an increasing multitude of Christians, and the bishops and clergy of those sequestered regions derived their ordination from the Catholic of Babylon. In a subsequent age, the zeal of the Nestorians overleaped the limits which had confined the ambition and curiosity both of the Greeks and Persians. The missionaries of Balch and Samarcand pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar, and insinuated themselves into the camps of the valleys of Imaus and the banks of the Selinga."—Ch. 47.

Another letter from Mr. Rhys Davids closes the correspondence.

June 19, 1882.

Many thanks for allowing me to read Dr. Newman's very interesting letter, which I return. I cannot believe that the Buddhist traditions had any influence at all over Christian belief. It is much more likely that the later Buddhist writers were influenced by Nestorian and other Christian missionaries. But of this too there is no evidence as yet. The resemblances between the two accounts are often very striking at first sight, but they are shown by the slightest examination to rest on a basis of belief quite contradictory. Thus, the Buddhists did not ascribe to Gotama any divine birth in the Christian sense. Before his descent into his mother's womb he was a *deva;* that is, one of the innumerable spiritual beings who

were supposed to people the Tusita heavens. When Buddhism arose the Hindoos believed in a Great First Cause, in whom and by whom all things exist. The Buddhists established no connection between their Master and this Being.

So again of miracles. The oldest research in the Pāli Suttas do not ascribe to the Buddha any such actions as are designated in Christian writings by the word "miracle." In a similar way all that exact identity of phraseology which is necessary to support the hypothesis of a borrowing either from one side or the other, seems to me to fade quite away when the supposed resemblances between Christian and Buddhist accounts are examined. "Buddha came on earth to redeem the world." Well, I can quite imagine a Christian writer so describing the Buddhist belief. But, though the description is fair enough, the *expression* cannot be found, so far as I am aware, in any Pāli Sutta. The expression used in the Nālaka Sutta, by the *devas* in their song of joy at the birth of the child, comes near to it, but it is not the same. They say "The Bodisat, the excellent pearl, the incomparable, is born for a good and for a blessing in the world of men," &c. And it is only to the Pāli Suttas that we can go for any evidence of Buddhist expressions actually used (before the Christian era) to describe events in Gotama's life. Asoka's edicts have not a word about the life of Buddha. The bas-reliefs at Barhut are certainly pre-Christian, but they give pictures, not words. And the Chinese and other accounts are all post-Christian. It is in these Chinese books (or rather in the English phraseology of our particular translator of them) that the supposed Christian phrases are usually found. I have the honour therefore to find myself in agreement with your revered correspondent as

to the uncertainty of any conclusions that might be drawn from the coincidence in expression of these later Buddhists with the much older Christian writers. This does not, of course, at all prevent me from welcoming the very instructive parallel * which you have so fully drawn out between the tendency of the Buddhist ethical system and the "goal of modern thought"—the husk, without the beauty and the poetry of the older conception.

We may conclude then, I think, to the untenableness of the objection urged from Buddhism against the Claims of Christianity as a universal religion.

* The parallel to which Mr. Rhys Davids is so good as thus to refer will be found in chapter i. of my work *Ancient Religion and Modern Thought*.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLĀM.

I COME now to the other great religion of the world which contests the Claims of Christianity wherewith we are concerned in this volume. Islām is not, like Buddhism, a decadent and moribund faith. It is still true to its dominant idea that "there is no God but God, and that Mohammed is the Prophet of God," which penetrated the minds, and ruled the lives, and gave victory to the swords of the earliest Moslems. Of that idea it is still the faithful and effective preacher. Its converts, during the last half-century, beyond all question, vastly outnumber those of Christianity. Nay, it has made far more proselytes from us than we have from it. The greatness of its recent missionary work in Africa is universally acknowledged. And Mr. Talboys Wheeler, a singularly well qualified judge, tells us,* "The people of India are drifting slowly but surely towards the religion of Islām: few competent observers will deny the fact." It may, indeed, be objected that not many wise men, after the flesh, not many

* In the Preface to his *History of India.*

mighty, not many noble, are called into its fold: that its votaries are found, chiefly, among the lower races. We should remember, however, that not unfrequently, in the annals of the human race, it has been given to the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and to the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and to the base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. Nor is Mr. Pearson by any means alone in believing that for the races which we call "lower" a great part is destined in a by no means distant age. Certain it is, that at a very critical moment in the fortunes of Europe, Islām narrowly failed to wrest from Christianity the control of Western civilisation.* And, assuredly, there is nothing intrinsically irrational in the supposition that it may achieve, in the future, the triumph which escaped it in the past.

* It may be noted that some accomplished and authoritative persons regard that failure as matter for regret. Landor may serve as a specimen of them. He writes: "How flourishing was Spain under the Saracens during great part of a millennium! What pleasure and politeness, what chivalry and poetry, what arts and sciences, in her cities! What architecture within her walls, and round about! What bridges! What fountains! What irrigation! Look at her now under her Bourbons. Look off from her, look toward Italy. Who, tell me, who, M. le Marquis, hath held down men unimproved, unprogressive, motionless? No, not motionless—nor was the wheel of Ixion."—Conversation between Beranger and La Roche-Jaquelin, *Works*, vol. vi. p. 583.

Such a view is, of course, unfamiliar to us. But there are fifty millions of our fellow subjects to whom a belief in the superiority of Islām over Christianity is as much a first principle as the opposite belief is with us: who hold that it is the faith of Mohammed, not the faith of Christ, which possesses valid claims to be the universal religion and to set up a universal society. They have recently found an effective spokesman in a member of their own Church. Syed Ameer Ali's elaborate work, *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, enables us to contemplate Christianity from without and Islām from within. And the Syed's great intelligence and wide culture, literary skill and manifest sincerity, no less than his distinguished position as a Judge of the High Court in Bengal, well qualify him for the grave task he has undertaken. He must have been often confronted with the claims of the Christian religion. No doubt some of the zealous men who are labouring for its diffusion in India have urged him to embrace it. In six hundred and sixty-five admirably written pages he explains, in effect, why he has not embraced it. He gives his reasons for the Mohammedan faith that is in him. But his purpose goes beyond that. He thinks that the considerations which satisfy him of the superiority of Mohammed over the rest of the world's religious teachers, and of Islām over the rest of the world's religions, may satisfy others. He expresses the hope that his

work "may prove of some practical value to those Seekers of Truth in the West, whose minds have gone forth in the quest of a positive and eclectic Faith, suited for the noblest, and, by its disciplinary character, also for the lowest natures." * He judges it probable that the "creed of the Arabian Prophet [may] receive acceptance among European Communities." † His book is, in fact, an Apology for Islām. I shall, in this Chapter, ask my readers to give it the full and fair consideration which it deserves.

We live in an age when this request may be made with good hope of success. One great achievement of the modern mind has been almost entirely to reconstruct historical science. With very few exceptions, the historians of the three centuries immediately preceding the French Revolution were little more than annalists. That any moral significance underlay the tale of sound and fury which they related, that the spiritual and intellectual movements running through the ages are the most important elements in the career of humanity, that the phenomena of history are not isolated and fortuitous, but are connected, are co-ordinate, and are the expression of laws, they never so much as dreamed. Here, as in so many other spheres of thought, Voltaire is the herald of the modern spirit. His erudition was inconsiderable. His philosophy was not very profound.

* Preface, p. viii. † *Ibid.*

But in originality of ideas, in knowledge of human life, in keenness of vision, and in clearness of conception, he stands alone among his contemporaries. How admirable the manner in which he blends with his narrative of important events the most luminous sketches of the literary characteristics of an age, of the state of arts and sciences, of the material elements of civilization! How penetrating his apprehension of the springs of political action, of the real causes of great revolutions! How acute his examination of the received fables, the accredited traditions with which passion and credulity had encumbered the story of nations and the exploits of heroes! In all this, he was the precursor of the more patient and philosophic, if less brilliant intellects, whose searching criticism of long-received narratives, whose patient investigations of hidden causes, whose laborious employment of analysis, comparison, deduction, have rewritten the history of well-nigh every nation under heaven.

Islām is certainly one of the subjects in which the employment of this "large discourse looking before and after," has been singularly successful. Fifty years ago the stereotyped view of that great religion, as we find it, for example, in the quaint pages of Ockley, was generally received. Here and there, the more sagacious account of it given in Gibbon's masterly chapters found acceptance. But its real sources, its true character, its actual place in the evolution of religious thought,

were as little understood as were the earliest years of Rome before Niebuhr wrote; as was the making of the English nation in the days of Hume. The works of Sprenger and Weil, of Dozy and Kremer, of Deutsch and Palmer, of Muir and Bosworth Smith, to mention only a few out of many who have laboured abundantly in this field, have let in a flood of light upon these subjects. Thanks to them, our information concerning the life and deeds of the Arabian Prophet, and the sources of his religion, is as complete and exact as is our information regarding the authors and the antecedents of the Protestant Reformation. Of course in their estimates of the last born of the world's great faiths, and its originator, there is considerable diversity. But certain it is that a general result of their labours has been largely to modify in the common mind the adverse judgment of him and it, once unquestioningly received. Probably Mr. Freeman represents, with substantial accuracy, the view most widely current among intelligent persons in the Western world when he writes, "the camel-driver of Mecca, the conqueror of Medina, call him Prophet, Reformer, or Impostor as we will, soars far above every other man in the history of the East; his religion is the truest of false religious systems."* This view, of course, falls very far short of that which Syed Ameer Ali expounds. Still those who hold it may be said to have gone one mile in his direction. He

* *The History and Conquests of the Saracens*, p. 6.

does not despair of inducing them to go twain. And now let us turn to his pages.

The learned Judge has divided his work into two parts. The first ten chapters deal with the life of Mohammed. The remaining nine with the tenets of Islām. The division is not, indeed, strictly preserved. The second part of the book contains a vindication of the Arabian Prophet from certain charges of sexual licence commonly brought against him. The first presents various fragments of his teaching. I do not complain of this. In the case of the founder of a religion, as I shall have occasion hereafter to insist more at large, it is impossible, rigidly to separate the man from his doctrine. In estimating the Syed's book I shall follow, as much as possible, his method. I shall consider, first, his apology for Mohammed's life; and, secondly, his claim for Mohammed's religion.

The career of Mohammed falls naturally into three divisions. First, there is his life to his fortieth year—the year 610 of our era—when he entered upon his public ministry. Next there are the twelve years, ending with 622, in which he devoted himself to the peaceful propagation of his doctrine. The close of this period is marked by the Hijra or flight to Medīna; a turning-point in his existence, from which the Mohammedan Calendar appropriately dates. And lastly there are the ten

years in which we behold him as chief, warrior, supreme magistrate and law-giver, until his strange eventful history ends in 632. With regard to the first of these stages of Mohammed's existence, there is little difference of opinion among his biographers. It is worth while, however, as indicative of Syed Ameer Ali's point of view, to note his attitude in respect of the signs and wonders by which, according to the early historians of Islām, the advent of its founder was accompanied :—

"His birth, they say, was attended with signs and portents from which the nations of the earth could know that the Deliverer had appeared. The rationalistic historian smiles; the religious controversialist, who, upon *à priori* grounds, accepts without comment the accounts of the wise men following the star, scoffs at these marvels. To the critical student, whose heart is not devoid of sympathy with earlier modes of thought, and who is not biassed with preconceived notions, "the portents and signs" which the Islamist says attended the birth of his Prophet are facts deserving of historical analysis. We moderns perceive in the ordinary incidents of the lives of nations and individuals the current of an irresistible law. What wonder then that, thirteen hundred years ago, they perceived in the fall of a nation's memorial the finger of God, pointing to the inevitable destiny which was to overtake it in its iniquity?" *

What were the religious convictions and practices among which Mohammed grew up to manhood is a question by no means easy to answer with precision. The substratum, so to speak, of the old religion of Arabia, was the cult of a Supreme Deity (Allah taāla). But there were many lesser gods to whom

* P. 70.

homage was also paid, and whose worship was accompanied by a multitude of superstitions, which found expression in coarse and impure idolatry. A movement, however, was in progress, aiming at a religious reformation, however confusedly and uncertainly. In the searchings after a purer faith made by men like Zaid and Waraka, Obaidullah and Osmān, we may trace the workings of

> "The Spirit of the years to come,
> Yearning to mix himself with Life."

No doubt Mohammed fell under these influences, in his youth and early manhood, of which I shall here present our author's account, taking leave, however, somewhat to abridge it:—

"In the house of Abū Tālib, Mohammed passed his early life. We can almost see the lad, with his deep wistful eyes, earnest and thoughtful, looking as it were into futurity, moving about in the humble unpretentious household of his uncle, or going often into the desert to look upon the beauteous face of nature; sweet and gentle of disposition, painfully sensitive to human suffering, this pure-hearted child of the desert was the beloved of his small circle, and there ever existed the warmest attachment between uncle and nephew. 'The angels of God had opened his heart and filled it with light.' . . . . Deeply versed in the legendary lore of his nation, education, in the modern sense of the term, he had none. With all his affection for his people, in his ways and mode of thought he seemed far removed from them, isolated in the midst of a chaotic society with his eyes fixed intently on the moving panorama of an effete and depraved age. The lawlessness rife among the Meccans, the sudden outbursts of causeless and sanguinary quarrels among the tribes frequenting

the fairs of Okadh, the immorality and scepticism of the Koreish, naturally caused feelings of intense horror and disgust in the mind of the sensitive youth. In the twenty-fifth year of his age, Mohammed travelled once more * into Syria, as the factor or steward of a noble Koreishite lady named Khadîja, a kinswoman of his. The prudence with which he discharged his duties made a deep impression on Khadîja, which gradually deepened into attachment. A marriage which proved a singularly happy one was soon after arranged between Mohammed and his noble kinswoman, and was solemnised amid universal rejoicings. In spite of the disparity of age between Mohammed and his wife, who was much the senior of her husband, there always existed the tenderest devotion on both sides. This marriage 'brought him that repose and exemption from daily toil which he needed in order to prepare his mind for his great work. But beyond that, it gave him a loving woman's heart, that was the first to believe in his mission, that was ever ready to console him in his despair, and to keep alive within him the thin flickering flame of hope when no man believed in him—not even himself—and the world was black before his eyes.' Khadîja is a notable figure—an exemplar among the women of Islâm. The calumny which is levelled at Mohammed's system, that it has degraded the female sex, is sufficiently refuted by the high position which his wife and youngest daughter, 'our Lady of Light,' occupy in the estimation of the Islamist."

This is not at all bad rhetoric, and I am far from saying that it may not be substantially true. I doubt, indeed, whether the learned Judge would, upon reflection, maintain the thesis which has escaped him in the fervour of composition, that the charge of degrading the female sex urged against Islām is "sufficiently refuted" by the reverence of

* Abū Tālib carried on a considerable trade with Syria and Yemen, and Mohammed had previously accompanied him on one of his mercantile journeys thither.

pious Moslems for Khadīja and Fātima. It wants a great deal more refutation than that. But what cannot be doubted is the blameless life and high character of Mohammed during this first period of his career. Sir William Muir is entirely warranted when he tells us "all authorities agree in ascribing to the youth of Mohammed a correctness of deportment and a purity of manners rare among the people of Mecca." * Nor does Syed Ameer Ali exaggerate in affirming, more floridly, that during those fifteen years of his married life which preceded his assumption of the prophetic office, "his gentle, sweet disposition, his austerity of conduct, the severe purity of his life, his scrupulous refinement, his ever-ready helpfulness towards the poor and the weak, his noble sense of honour, his unflinching fidelity, his stern sense of duty, had won him, among his compatriots, the high and enviable designation of *al-Amīn*, the Trusty." † Of the details of his outward life during this time, we know nothing except that, upon a few occasions, he intervened in the public affairs of his city as a "vir pietate gravis," to compose differences and repress lawlessness, with the authority attaching to unsullied reputation and recognised wisdom. Of the workings of his mind no account whatever exists, and the conjectures in which various writers have indulged are of small value. No doubt in his two journeys into Syria he must have seen

* *Life of Mahomet*, vol. ii. p. 14. † P. 78.

something of the degenerate Christianity which existed there, described, not too strongly, by the Syed, as "a scene of unutterable moral and social desolation; rival creeds and sects tearing each other to pieces; wrangling over the body of the God they pretended to worship." * But to what extent he was really acquainted with the creed and cult of the Catholic Church, or with the doctrines and practices of Judaism, "we know not, and no search will make us know." Certain, however, it is, that, from the first, religious questions vividly interested him; that his temperament was essentially meditative and introspective, and that he was by no means exempt from that melancholy which seems ever to accompany deep passion and high thought. His was one of those minds, stronger in the intuitive than in the ratiocinative faculty, to which are given from time to time sudden and brief openings of truth that may properly be called mystical.

Such was Mohammed when in the fortieth year of his life the call came to him with which the second period of his career opens. But concerning this memorable event let us hear Syed Ameer Ali:—

"Often in the dark and benighted pathways of concrete existence, the soul of every great man has been conscious of

* P. 79.

unrealised yet not unseen influences, which have led to some of the happiest achievements of humanity. From Samuel, that ancient seer, wild and awful as he stands, deep in the misty horizon of the past, to Jesus in the wilderness, pondering over the darksome fate of his people and the magnitude of his work, listening to the sweet accents of the God of Truth; from Jesus to Mohammed in the solitude of his mountain retreat, there is no break in the action of these influences." "For years after his marriage it had been [Mohammed's] habit to betake himself, sometimes with his family, at other times alone, for prayer and meditation to a cave on the Mount Hira, 'a huge barren rock, torn by cliff and hollow ravine, standing out solitary in the full white glare of the desert sun, shadowless, flowerless, without well or rill.' Here, in this cave, he often remained whole nights, plunged in profoundest thought, deep in communion with the unseen yet all-pervading God of the Universe. Slowly the heaven and the earth fill with predestined vision and command. . . . The mental visions and the apparition of angels at these moments were the bright though gradual dawnings of those truths with which he was to quicken the world into life. . . . Whilst lying self-absorbed, he is called by a mighty Voice, surging like the waves of the ocean, to cry. Twice the Voice called, and twice he struggled and waived its call. But a fearful weight was laid upon him, and an answer was wrung out of his heart. 'Cry!' called the Voice for the third time. And he said, 'What shall I cry?' Came the answer, 'Cry in the name of thy Lord.' When the Voice had ceased to speak, telling him how from the minutest beginnings man had been called into existence, and lifted up by understanding and knowledge of the Lord, who is most beneficent, and who *by the pen* had revealed that which men did not know, Mohammed woke from his trance, and felt as if the words spoken to his soul had been written in his heart. A great trembling came upon him, and he hastened home . . . exhausted in mind and body, to the bosom of his devoted wife, praying only to be covered from the overwhelming Presence."*

It was not without many an inward struggle that

* Pp. 80-86.

Mohammed attained to certitude of his prophetic mission. His wife Khadīja was the first to believe him—"she made his burden lighter to him," the tradition finally says. The next convert was his cousin Alī, one of the noblest characters in the history of Islām. "O father," the young man said, when Abū Tālib asked him concerning this new religion, "I believe in God and His Prophet." "Well," replied the venerable patriarch, "thou art free to cleave to Mohammed; he will not lead thee to aught but what is good." Zaid, the Prophet's enfranchised slave, was the next convert; and he was followed by Abū Bakr, a wealthy merchant of great probity. Slowly the little band increased, as one after another of the Meccans believed the word which Mohammed spoke, and turned away from idols. Persecution arose. The Prophet and his disciples were insulted and calumniated: they were pelted with dirt when engaged in their devotions: thorns were scattered in the places whither they were wont to resort. Gradually, as in spite of these hindrances, the new Church grew, the persecution assumed a severer character, and the first martyrs of Islām sealed their faith with their blood. At last, in the fifth year of the Prophet's ministry, one hundred and one of his disciples, eighty-three men and eighteen women, fled their country and sought refuge in the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia. The Koreish despatched an embassy, to demand the surrender of the fugitives. The King sent for

them, and questioned them concerning the new religion. And Jaffār, the brother of Ali, made answer:—

"O King, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols; we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies, and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law but that of the strong; when God raised up to us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware. And he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols, and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of our neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly vices and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms and to observe the fast. We have believed in him; we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God, and to return to the worship of idols and stones and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to thy country; and we hope that thou wilt protect us." *

The King did protect them. But the unsuccessful issue of the embassy served to increase the madness of the people against Mohammed; and his uncle Abū Tālib urged him to give up his task. He made answer, "O, my uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand, and the moon on my left, to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom, until God made manifest His cause, or I perished in the attempt." His

* P. 100.

"persistive constancy" impressed many men of energy, talent, and worth; and in spite of violent opposition from the rulers of the people, Islām grew and multiplied. In 619 of our era—"the year of mourning," Moslems call it—Khadija was taken from the Prophet's side; and in his uncle Abū Tālib he lost not indeed a disciple—the old man never gave his adhesion to the new faith—but a protector who had often effectually shielded him from outrage. The great majority of the people of Mecca still turned a deaf ear to his message. But among the pilgrims who came from Medīna some believed on him, and spread his doctrine in that city. It is of this period in the Prophet's career that Sir William Muir writes, "Mahomet, thus holding his people at bay, waiting in the still expectation of victory, to outward appearance defenceless, and with his little band, as it were, in the lion's mouth, yet trusting in His Almighty power, whose messenger he believed himself to be, presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only in the sacred records of such scenes as that of the Prophet of Israel, when he complained to his Master: 'I, even I only, am left.'" * The new faith found, however, many adherents in Medīna, and thither when the signs multiplied that a final effort would be made to crush it out in Mecca, the Prophet sent his disciples, remaining himself at his post, with Ali and Abū Bakr. It was then that a

* *Life of Mahomet*, vol. ii. p. 228.

plot for his assassination was laid. But Mohammed and his two companions escaped, and after many perilous adventures entered Medīna in safety on the 2nd of July, 622.

With the Hijra begins that last act in Mohammed's life which ends with his death in 632. The net result of his work during that decade was to cleanse Arabia from foul idolatry and gross immorality, and to diffuse throughout it a Monotheistic religion and a somewhat severe ethical code; in a word, to work the moral and spiritual regeneration of his country. So much is certain. Equally certain is it, that during this time of triumph—and consequently of trial—the same "plain living and high thinking" marked the days of the Prophet. His mode of life, his dress, and his furniture retained to the very last a character of patriarchal simplicity. Many a time, Abū Huraira reports, he had to go without a meal. Dates and water frequently formed his only nourishment. Often, for months together, no fire could be lighted in his house, from scantiness of means. "God," says the Moslem historian, "had indeed put before him the key to the treasures of the world, but he refused it." This witness is true. Still, it is the last act of the Prophet's life which presents the greatest difficulties to his apologist. Few candid critics, few intelligent men whose judgment is not fatally biassed by

religious, or—what is in the present day commoner—irreligious prejudice, will deny his sincerity and goodness up to the date of the Hijra, or will withhold from him their respect and admiration as they behold him—

> "thro' all this tract of years
> Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,"

and devoting himself, with unwavering singleness of purpose, to the work of religious and moral reformation concerning which his disciples gave such striking testimony to the Abyssinian king. "As yet," writes Mr. Freeman, "nothing could be alleged against his life. A thoroughly good and righteous man according to his light," he, "in his own person fulfilled the duties which he taught. . . . [But now], gradually he appears in a new character. The persecuted apostle is transformed into the triumphant warrior. . . . He who had once asked for mere toleration for himself, now applauded, as heaven sent, a judgment which condemned seven hundred captives to the slaughter. He who in his youth had lived as the faithful spouse of the aged Khadijah, now, in his old age, multiplies wives to himself, and brings forth divine revelations to justify in himself the passions which he condemned in others. . . . [In this] period of his career it is impossible not to recognize a deterioration. . . . With his first appeal to the sword there seems to have come upon him a general unscrupulousness as

to the means by which his ends were compassed. . . . That he fell off in many respects is clear. He may have fallen off even so far as to put forth as divine revelations, mere excuses for his own frailty or devices to obtain his ends. Yet I would not willingly believe this. . . . His moral sense was evidently obscured ; but I do not believe that at any moment he was the conscious deluder of others." *

Such is the indictment, very temperately and fairly stated, which Syed Ameer Ali has to meet. We will see presently how he answers it. But I should first observe that to two of its counts no defence seems to be really required. Mr. Freeman himself allows,—"Under his circumstances, it is really no very great ground for condemnation that Mohammed did appeal to the sword. He did no more than follow the precedents of his own and every surrounding nation." And Carlyle has pointed out with undeniable truth, "We do not find that the Christian religion either always discarded the sword—when once it had got one." Toleration is an essentially modern notion. To expect it in the time of Mohammed is an anachronism. Again, the more closely and carefully Mohammed's career is scrutinised, the clearer is it, in my judgment, that the accusation of imposture cannot, in any degree, be sustained against him; that it must be rejected, even more decidedly and completely than Mr. Freeman rejects it. The end

* *The History and Conquests of the Saracens*, pp. 43-59.

is the trial. And there are few things in religious history nobler than the picture presented to us of the last days of the Prophet; conscious that the time of his departure was at hand; that he must soon undergo "ce terrible tête-à-tête avec Dieu," which he well knew awaited him. It was in the prevision of his approaching dissolution that he made that last pilgrimage to Mecca, when, to the multitudes assembled for the sacred rites, he delivered, from the top of Jabal-ul-Arafāt, that remarkable discourse, which is to Moslems what the Sermon on the Mount is to Christians. After bidding them give good heed to his words, "for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me, after this year, to find myself among you," he proceeded to remind them of the great religious and ethical duties which he had taught. And when he finished his exhortation with the appeal to Heaven, "O Lord, I have delivered my message and accomplished my work," all the people cried out, "Yea, verily, thou hast." And then the Prophet answered, "O Lord, I beseech thee, bear thou witness to it." This was on the 7th of March, 632. At the end of May he fell into the sickness which was to prove fatal to him. On one sleepless night, in the course of his malady, he arose and went to the cemetery of El Bākir, where many of his friends were resting, and prayed and wept by their tombs, invoking God's blessing for his "companions sleeping in peace" whom he was soon to

rejoin. Until the third day before his death he attended the public offices of religion. And upon the last occasion of his appearing in the mosque, when the "usual praises and hymns to God" were ended, he addressed the congregation thus: "Moslems, if I have wronged any one, I am here to answer it; if I owe aught to any man, all I may happen to possess belongs to you." "Yes," replied a voice from the crowd, "thou owest me three dirhems of silver which I gave to a poor man, at thy request." They were immediately paid back with the words, "Better to blush in this world than in the next." After this his strength rapidly failed, until the end came. Broken words of prayer escaped from him in his last agony; "Eternity of Paradise:" "Pardon:" "Yes; I come:" "The blessed companionship on high."

"Truth sits upon the lips of dying men." Assuredly, we may utterly reject, for good and all, the old hypothesis of imposture in the case of Mohammed. With regard to the documents whereby it is commonly supported, the chapters in the Qu'rān which he is supposed to have produced in order to justify the incidents in his career deemed most blameworthy, we will presently hear Syed Ameer Ali. Here I may remark that even supposing the view of them commonly accepted among the Prophet's Western critics well founded, he would but illustrate naïvely—with the *naïveté* of good faith—a curious but undeniable tendency of

human nature, manifested as clearly by many sincerely religious men before him: for example, by Cromwell. Amiel has justly observed, 'On fait toujours Dieu complice, afin de légaliser par là ses propres iniquités. Les Te Deums sont le baptême de tous les carnages réussis, et les clergés ont eu des bénédictions pour tous les scandales victorieux. Cela s'applique de peuple à peuple et d'homme à homme."

And now let us turn to the Syed, and consider how he answers the charges of sensuality and cruelty to which Mohammed, in this last portion of his career, seems justly liable in the judgment of Mr. Freeman, whom I have selected as a type of the Arabian Prophet's fairest and most competent critics.

The worst instance of Mohammed's sensuality, Mr. Freeman appears to consider, is afforded in the matter of Zainab, the wife of his freedman Zaid. And almost from Mohammed's own days, this incident has been much used against him by his Christian opponents. Thus, we find St. John Damascene, writing about the end of the first Mohammedan century: "Zeid had a handsome wife. Mamed fell in love with her. As they sat together, Mamed said, 'God has charged me to take thy wife.' Zeid answered, 'Thou art the apostle; do as God told thee.' Or to go further back, he said, 'God charged me that thou divorce thy wife.' Zeid divorced her. After some days Mamed said, 'God

also charged me to take her.' So he took her and made her an adulteress. And then he enacted that every one who will, may divorce his wife, and after the divorce, if she return to him, another must marry her first." * And Sprenger, who indeed is not exactly a Christian, writing in our own days, gives much the same account of the matter, dismissing the alleged Qu'rānic revelation as the production of pious scoundreldom.† The following is the Syed's version of the incident:—

"Mohammed had married his devoted friend and freedman, Zaid, to a high-born lady of the name of Zainab, descended from two of the noblest families of Arabia. Proud of her birth, and perhaps also of her beauty, her marriage with a freedman rankled in her breast. Mutual aversion at last culminated in disgust. Probably this disgust on the husband's part was enhanced, by the frequent repetition, in a manner which women only know how to adopt, of a few words which had once fallen from the lips of Mohammed. He had occasion to visit the house of Zaid, and upon seeing Zainab's unveiled face had exclaimed, as a Moslem would say, at the present day when admiring a beautiful picture or statue, 'Praise be to God, the ruler of hearts!' These words, uttered in natural admiration, were often repeated by Zainab to her husband, to show how even the Prophet praised her beauty, and naturally added to his displeasure. At last he came to the decision not to live any longer with her, and with this determination he went to the Prophet and expressed his intention of being divorced, 'Why,' demanded Mohammed: 'hast thou found any fault in her?' 'No,' replied Zaid, 'but I can no longer

* *Opera*, vol. i. p. 114.

† "Der Stil des Mohammed unterscheidet sich nicht von dem anderer frömmelnder Schurken: Gott im Munde, die Welt im Herzen." (Vol. i. p. 404.)

live with her.' The Prophet then peremptorily said, 'Go and guard her life; treat her well and fear God, for God has said, "Take care of your wives and fear the Lord."' But Zaid was not moved from his purpose, and in spite of the command of the Prophet he divorced Zainab. Mohammed was grieved at the conduct of Zaid, more especially as it was he who had arranged the marriage of the two uncongenial spirits. After Zainab had succeeded in obtaining a divorce from Zaid, she commenced importuning Mohammed to marry her, and was not satisfied until she had won for herself the honour of being one of the wives of the Prophet." "This marriage created a sensation among the idolaters, who, whilst marrying their step-mothers and mothers-in-law, looked upon the marriage of the divorced wife of an adopted son (as Zaid at one time was regarded by Mohammed) by the adoptive father as culpable To disabuse the people of the notion that adoption creates any such tie as real consanguinity, some verses of Chapter XXXIII. were delivered. . . . One of the greatest tests of the Prophet's purity, is that Zaid never swerved from his devotion to his master."

It must be owned that the story as told by the Syed Ameer Ali—who founds himself upon the considerable authority of Tobāri—has a much better look than as told by St. John Damascene. "Il n'y a rien qui s'arrange aussi facilement comme les faits." The Seyd's arrangement of these facts is certainly more probable than the Saint's.

Next, as to the Coptic Mary, one of the two damsels sent, together with a white mule, by Mackondas, the Roman Governor of Egypt, as a present to the Prophet, in whose eyes her curly

* P. 335.

hair and fair features found favour. The story, as told by Western writers—the most amusing and least decorous version of it may be read in Gibbon—is that Hafsa, one of Mohammed's wives, and the termagant of his household, entering unexpectedly one day into her chamber, surprised him there in the embraces of the young Egyptian, and gave vent to her indignation in bitter reproaches: whereupon the Prophet engaged to renounce for the future the possession of Mary, and his outraged spouse promised forgiveness and secrecy, which promise she failed to keep; whence a domestic squabble of much bitterness, only to be appeased by a special revelation given in Chapter sixty-six of the Qu'rān: "O Prophet, why holdest thou that to be prohibited which God hath made lawful, seeking to please thy wives?" The Syed tells us that "the story is absolutely false and malicious, and is repudiated by all respectable commentators on the Qu'rān." The verse, he adds, which has been supposed to refer to it, refers, in truth, to a wholly different circumstance. Mohammed in his boyhood, when he tended the flocks of his uncle, had acquired a fondness for honey, which was often supplied to him by Zainab. Hafsa and Ayesha set to work to make him give up honey, and they succeeded in inducing him to vow that he would never touch it. But after he had made the vow, there came to him the thought that he was making something unlawful, in which there was nothing unlawful, simply to please his

wives. His conscience smote him as to his weakness, and then came the verse which I have cited. In support of this view the Syed quotes the commentator, Zamakhsharī.* One feels inclined to say with the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, "O, what learning is!" learning, which can dissolve the Coptic Mary into honey. To which may be added the judicious reflection of M. Renan: "Quel prophète tiendrait contre la critique, si la critique le poursuivait, comme le nôtre, jusque dans son alcôve?" † But whatever it may be that the Qu'rānic verse refers to, certain it is that this damsel bore Mohammed a son, Ibrahim, by whose death his hope of male posterity was finally extinguished.

As certain is it that Mohammed considerably exceeded the number of wives and concubines allowed to the faithful by the Qu'rān. Some dozen ladies—the Syed confesses to eleven—had the honour of calling him lord. "In his private conduct," writes Gibbon, "Mahomet indulged the appetites of a man and abused the claims of a prophet." The Syed has little difficulty in refuting this too sweeping rhetoric. The majority

* P. 334. Zamakhsharī, an illustrious Doctor of Islām, was born in the year 467 of the Hijra, and died in the year 538. His Keschāf is regarded as the most authoritative of all the commentaries on the Qu'rān.

† *Études d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 268.

of the Prophet's wives were helpless or widowed women, well stricken in years.* And

"by taking them into the bosom of his family, Mohammed provided for them in the only way which the circumstances of the age and people rendered possible." "Unlimited plurality of wives was the custom which he found in his country." "All his marriages were contracted before the revelation came restricting polygamy: and with that came the *other* which took away from him all privileges. Whilst his followers were free (subject to the conditions imposed by the law) to marry to the limit of four, and by the use of the power of divorce, which, in spite of the Prophet's denunciations, they still exercised, could enter into fresh alliances, he could neither put away any of his wives, whose support he had undertaken, nor could he marry any other. Was this the assumption of a privilege? Or was it not a humane provision for those already allied to him—and to himself a revelation of perfect self-abnegation in his prophetic task?" †

If Syed Ameer Ali is as accomplished a Judge as he here proves himself an advocate, the High Court in Bengal is to be congratulated. He has certainly made out a very good case for his Prophet in this matter.

Let us now pass to the charge of cruelty urged against the Arabian Prophet. There is overwhelming evidence that from first to last his private life

* Mr. Freeman has certainly made a slip in talking of Mohammed's "seraglio of youthful beauties." All his wives, except two, or it may be three, were ladies "of a certain age"; and he had no seraglio at all.

† Pp. 338-343.

was marked, in a singular degree, by benevolence and benignity, which extended even to the lower animals; nay, which extended even to his enemies.* This is unquestionable. Still many of his Western critics, most favourable in their general estimate of him, find it difficult to justify certain severities in the last period of his career. The chief of these is the execution of some hundreds of the Banū-Kuraizha. This Jewish tribe, after swearing alliance with Islām, had, at a critical moment, proved faithless to their bond. They were besieged and surrendered, merely stipulating that their fate should be left to the discretion of Saad, the Moslem General. Saad decided that the fighting-men should be put to the sword, and that the women and children should become the slaves of the victors. Mohammed approved of the decision, and it was executed. Even Mr. Lane Poole accounts it "a harsh, bloody sentence, worthy of the Episcopal generals of the army against the Albigenses:" even Mr. Bosworth Smith calls it "an act of cold-blooded and intense atrocity:" while Sir William Muir judges that it "leaves a dark stain of infamy upon the character of Mohammed." The Syed admitting that "the sentence passed upon the Banū-Kuraizha was, from our point of view, severe," pleads that "it was in perfect consonance with the laws of war as

* See some admirable pages in Syed Ameer Ali's book (pp. 219-24).

then understood by all the nations of the world"; that the victims "had themselves chosen Saad as the sole arbiter and judge of their fate"; that if "they had succeeded, they would have massacred their enemies without compunction"; and that as "people judge of the massacres of King David according to the lights of his time," so "the defensive wars of the early Moslems should be judged of from the same stand-point." Moreover, he cites, not however as representing his own opinion, a passage from a well-known sermon of Dr. Arnold, merely substituting "Arab" for "Israelite." "It is better that the wicked should be destroyed a hundred times over than that they should tempt those who are as yet innocent to join their company. Let us but think what might have been our own fate, and the fate of every nation under heaven, at this hour, had the sword of the Arab done its work more sparingly. The Arab's sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth, to the very end of the world." * Which, it must be owned, is very neat.

There is yet another grave allegation of cruelty against Mohammed as to which it will be well briefly to hear his apologist. It is that about the year 627 of the Christian era, what have been called certain "assassinations" were deliberately

* P. 172.

planned by him, and their perpetrators were blessed and rewarded. The Syed denies the propriety of the term "assassinations." The persons killed, he maintains, were traitors upon whom sentence of outlawry had been passed. He points out that there existed then no police court, no judicial tribunal, nor even a court-martial to take cognizance of individual crimes—which is no doubt true; that in the absence of a state executioner, any individual might become the executioner of the law; and that the maintenance of peace and order within the city depended upon the prompt execution of the sentence passed upon the culprits before they could rally their clansmen round them. He adds, "our Christian historians forget that even the laws of Christian England allow any person to pursue and kill an outlaw." * The learned Judge is doubtless a great authority on Mohammedan jurisprudence, for the elucidation of which he has written several much-esteemed text-books. His acquaintance with the laws of England is probably less exact. At all events, he is in error here. True it is that an outlawry in treason or felony has been held to amount to a conviction and attainder of the offence charged in the indictment, as much as if the offender had been found guilty by his country. True also is it that anciently an outlawed felon "was said to have *caput lupinum*, and might

* P. 162.

be knocked on the head like a wolf, by any one that might chance to meet him. Yet now, to avoid such inhumanity, it is holden that no man is entitled to kill him wantonly or wilfully, but in doing so is guilty of murder, unless it happens in the endeavour to apprehend him." *

I make no apology for lingering so long over these considerations. Even the question of the haughty beauty Zainab, or of the too fascinating Mary the Copt, cannot be dismissed with Hallam's dictum that "prurient curiosity about obsolete scandal is unworthy of the dignity of history." With the dictum itself I entirely agree. I have no sympathy whatever with a class of writers who make it their business to rake up the personal faults, defects, and sins of their political or theological opponents; who do not scruple to let their pen "rage like a fire among the noblest names," and who from the private failings of persons holding opinions which they dislike, proceed to draw unfavourable inferences as to the modes of faith, or the public acts of those persons. It is a species of ratiocination which is essentially bad and vicious. No conclusion as to the merits or demerits of a particular religious system can justly be derived from the vices or virtues of individual professors of it. But religious innovators occupy a peculiar position. Bad men do not found good churches.

* Blackstone's *Commentaries*, vol. iv. c. 24.

It is with spiritual births as with physical. The child is like the parent. The originators of religions and philosophies give us, in their formal teaching, an expression of themselves; an exterior embodiment of their interior being. Their doctrine is one manifestation of their personality, and is best judged of in connection with other manifestations. Their lives often throw a flood of light on their dogmas. Syed Ameer Ali is well warranted in endeavouring to clear away the aspersions on the fair fame of his Prophet. And he may be congratulated upon the large measure of success with which he has done so.

At the same time, it appears to me that a certain spaciousness of thought is absolutely necessary if we would rightly judge of these questions: and that other and profounder considerations might have been very properly and effectually urged by the Syed. The fundamental principles of the moral law are eternal and immutable. If morality is not absolute, it is nothing. The difference between Right and Wrong is not of degree, but of kind. The laws of ethics are, as the tragic poet speaks, "from everlasting, and no man knows their birthplace." "God," Dean Mansel excellently said, "did not create absolute morality, it is co-eternal with Himself." The ideas of morality, according to Kant's most true teaching, "are to be sought *à priori* among the pure ideas of the reason." All this is of primary importance, and must be strenu-

ously maintained, if morality is to be anything more than a matter of latitude and longitude, of temperament and cuisine. Not less important is it to remember that if the authority of the moral law is unconditioned, unchangeable, absolute, its apprehension varies indefinitely in different states of civilization; and that a man is bound by it, in practice, only so far as he may, and therefore should, apprehend it. The moral ideal is slowly developed. It lives and grows in the minds of men as the fundamental principles of ethics are more clearly discerned and more firmly grasped. And so in judging of the character of any man we must be on our guard against what Littré has well called "an abstract rationalism, which does not take into account conditions." It is precisely with the conditioned that history deals. Human life is concrete, complex, contingent, and is not to be explained by balancing abstractions. We must discern men and things in their time, not out of it. And "their time," let us remember, is not a mere question of chronology. One race may be in its ethical infancy when another has attained to moral maturity, and to judge both by the same measure would be absurd. St. Augustine, in a truly philosophical passage of his *Confessions*, supplies an admirable exposition of the verity whereon I am insisting. Vindicating against the Manicheans the righteousness of polygamous and homicidal Hebrew patriarchs, he insists, indeed, that true justice judges

not after human custom, but after that perfect Divine law, always and everywhere the selfsame, whereby the customs of places and times were disposed according to those places and times; yet points out that the practice of a more enlightened age is no measure for the practices of the whole human race.* The nineteenth-century critics of Mohammed commit a blunder like that of the Manichees, whom St. Augustine was confuting, when they expect from the Arabian Prophet the mild virtues of the British "lower middles," the peculiar tenderness of the Nonconformist conscience. The true norm of the relations of the sexes is monogamy, as admirably defined by the great Roman jurisprudent: "Nuptiæ sunt conjunctio maris et feminæ et consortium omnis vitæ: divini et humani juris communicatio." No lower conception than this sufficiently respects and guarantees the rights of the two *persons* whom matrimony blends in a single organism embracing their whole existence. Again, human life is properly held to be invested with a peculiar

* "Et non noveram justitiam veram interiorem, non ex consuetudine judicantem, sed ex lege rectissima Dei omnipotentis, qua formarentur mores regionum et dierum pro regionibus et diebus: cum ipsa ubique et semper esset, non alibi alia, nec alias aliter: secundum quam justi essent Abraham, et Isaac, et Jacob et Moyses, et David, et illi omnes laudati ore Dei: sed eos ab imperitis judicari iniquos, *judicantibus ex humano die*, et universos mores humani generis ex parte moris sui metientibus."—*Confess.*, l. iii. c. 7.

sacredness: "homo res sacra homini": and the reason is because man is a *person*. In proportion as, in the course of ethical evolution, the fact and significance of personality become more deeply apprehended, is the stringency of the moral obligation to respect it, increased. Assuredly, Mohammed, if judged by the ethical standard prevailing in his age and country, was no libertine, no man of blood. As assuredly he wrought a great work in elevating that standard, both as to the relations of man with woman, and as to the relations of man with man. The movement which he initiated was, in the best sense of the word, democratic. "No religion," says Sprenger, "is so completely the *vox populi* as Islām." *

So much concerning Mohammed as a man. Let us now consider him as a religious teacher.

Gibbon, in his epigrammatic way, declares that the faith of Islām is compounded of an eternal truth, and a necessary fiction: that there is only one God, and that Mohammed is the Prophet of God. With the first part of this dictum we may entirely agree. What are we to say of the second? Was the declaration false that Mohammed was a prophet in the proper sense of the word, a προφήτης or teller forth of divine truth, commissioned from on high for a work of spiritual and moral reve-

* Vol. iii. p. 177

lation? That he himself believed this, with all his heart, we cannot, I think, doubt. Was he right in so believing? There are those who tell us—Sprenger and Dozy are among them—that his visions, his trances, his communings with the Unseen, were mere phenomena of epilepsy. It is a curious exhibition by those learned men of that abounding Materialism of the day, which will have a physical explanation of everything: and which finds that explanation satisfactory, precisely in proportion as it is degraded and degrading. Deutsch has sufficiently disposed of it with the quiet remark: "Epilepsy never made a man appear a prophet to himself, or even to the people of the East, or inspired him with the like heart-moving words, and glorious pictures," * which we find in the Qu'rān. Gibbon observes, correctly, that the story of Mohammed's epilepsy is an invention of the Greeks: and adds, "The energy of his mind, incessantly bent on the same objects, would convert a general obligation into a particular call: the warm suggestions of the understanding or the fancy would be felt as an inspiration of heaven: the labour of thought would expire in rapture and vision: and the inward sensation, the invisible monitor, would be described with the form and attributes of an angel of God." † No doubt there is much weight in these remarks.

* *Literary Remains of the late Emanuel Deutsch*, p. 82.

† *Decline and Fall*, c. 1.

But can we accept them as a complete explanation? There are more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in Gibbon's philosophy. Are we to put aside, as the mere phantasmagoria of sense, the whole cycle of emotions connected with the belief that men are in contact with the Infinite and Eternal, that they may in very truth hold communion with the Father of their spirits? Or are we to account of this apprehension of the Supreme Reality transcending sense, as the exclusive prerogative of a single creed? It was one of Laurence Oliphant's sharp sayings, I think, that the only monopoly of which any religion can boast is a monopoly of the errors peculiar to itself. Without committing ourselves to that dictum, we may safely affirm with Cardinal Newman that "Revelation, properly speaking, is a universal, not a local gift"; that "there is something true and divinely revealed, in every religion, all over the earth;"* and with St. Augustine: "Nec quisquam, præter Te, alius est doctor veri, ubicumque et undecumque claruerit."† In the grandest of Latin hymns the Sibyl is mentioned, side by side with the Psalmist, as illuminated from on high. St. Paul describes a poet of the Greeks as "a prophet of their own." Nay, must we not hold that in every man there is something of the prophetic gift—*μαντευμά τι*, Plato and

* *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 3rd ed. (1871), p. 82.

† *Confess.*, l. v. c. 6.

Aristotle call it, "a certain divination, presage and parturient divination," according to Cudworth's interpretation? And here we have the soundest explanation of those instinctive repugnances, inexplicable presentiments, inspirations of conduct and the like of which we are all sometimes conscious, and for which we can find no motive. For most of us, the babble of men overpowers, during most of our lives, the whisperings from the Infinite. Inspiration of any kind, artistic, philosophical, or religious, is impossible if we are always struggling in a crowd. It is in the solitude, whether of Mount Horeb, Mount Carmel, Mount Hira, that the Voice from on high is most clearly heard. May we not believe, without absurdity, that to Mohammed, also, brooding over the abysses of space and being, "voyaging through dark seas of thought alone," that ineffable Reality was verily revealed which thenceforth was to be to him the light of life? Surely he, too, might say, with Columbus,—

> "God
> Hath more than glimmered on me. O my Lord,
> I swear to you I heard His voice in days
> Of doubt, and cloud, and storm, when drowning life
> Sank all but out of sight. I heard His voice,
> 'Be not cast down; I lead thee by the hand;
> Fear not.'"

Very fine is the story of his reply to Abū Bakr, when the two, flying from Mecca, were concealed in a cave of Mount Thorus, and the heart of his companion quaked with fear, as they heard the

steps of the pursuers. "We are but two," said Abū Bakr. "Nay," answered Mohammed, "we are three: God is with us." And, upon another occasion, late in his life, we find the same dominant thought manifested. The Prophet was sleeping at the foot of a tree, at some distance from his camp. He awoke and beheld Durthur, a hostile warrior, standing over him with drawn sword, and heard the challenge, "O Mohammed, who is there now to save thee?" "God," was the reply. The sword dropped from the hand of the awe-stricken soldier. Mohammed grasped it, and in turn held it over him. "Who is there now to save thee, Durthur?" "Alas! no one." "Then, learn to be merciful." Surely we may hold concerning this man, that he "endured as seeing Him who is invisible": seeing, indeed, "per speculum in ænigmate": "through a glass darkly." "Broken lights," we must say of these revelations of his. But is it not true that "the best in this kind are but shadows"? "I cannot conceal my conviction," writes Mr. Freeman, "that in a certain sense, his belief in his own mission was well founded. Surely a good and sincere man, full of confidence in his Creator, who works an immense reform both in faith and practice, is truly a direct instrument in the hands of God, and may be said to have a commission from Him." *

* *The History and Conquests of the Saracens*, p. 59.

So far, then, as it appears to me, we may substantially agree with Syed Ameer Ali. We now come to the parting of the ways. Our author is not content with vindicating the personal rectitude and prophetic mission of the founder of his religion. It is not enough for him that Islām was a true reformation, specially adapted to the needs of the country and age in which it was introduced. The Syed will have it that Mohammed is "the grandest of figures upon whom the light of history has ever shone":* that he "concentrated into a focus all the fragmentary lights which had ever fallen upon the heart of man":† that "the wonderful adaptability of the Islamic precepts to all ages and nations; their entire concordance with the light of reason; the absence of all mysterious doctrines to cast a shade of sentimental ignorance round the primal truths implanted in the human heart—all prove that Islām represents the latest development of the religious faculties of our being":‡ that "of all the religions of the world that have ruled the consciences of mankind, the Islām of Mohammed alone combines the conceptions which have, in different ages, furnished the mainsprings of human conduct—the consciousness of human dignity, so valued in the ancient philosophies, and the sense of human sinfulness so dear to the Christian apologist."§ "In Islām," he maintains, "is joined a

* P. 130. † P 212.
‡ P. 275. § P 277.

lofty idealism with the most rationalistic practicability."* "It was reserved for Mohammed to fulfil his mission and that of his predecessors."† "Why," he enquires, "should not the true Christian do honour to the Preacher who put the finishing stroke to the work of the earlier Masters? Did he not call back the wandering forces of the world into the channel of Progress?"‡

To these enquiries of Syed Ameer Ali the answer must be No. We may cheerfully admit, nay we should strenuously contend, that, considered as a reforming movement in Arabia, Islām represents an advance in religious thought. We cannot admit, but must most strenuously deny, that, considered as an universal religion, it supersedes the Claims of Christianity. It may be worth while to enlarge a little on this point.

The great merit of Mohammed, as a religious reformer, is commonly taken to be that he substituted Theism for Polytheism in his native country, and a higher morality for a lower. But to say this, is to say too little. In order really to understand the true place of Mohammed in the world's religious history, we should understand of what kind his Theism was. Deutsch has called Islām, "Judaism, as adapted to Arabia." And no doubt this is true. The central thought of Mohammed's religious teaching is identical with what we may call the kernel of the Mosaic theology. The great-

* P. 278. † P. 211. ‡ P. 282.

est single step ever made by the world in religion was the attainment of that conception of the Divine Nature embodied in the formula "Ego Sum Qui Sum"—"I Am That I Am." The essence of the Divine Concept is not goodness, not power, not wisdom. Man may be good and powerful and wise. The incommunicable attribute of Deity is self-existence. He is *the* Being, *the* Life, *the* Absolute. These words denote, or rather adumbrate, His unthinkable* prerogative. But this concept of Being implies the concept of Cause, and finds therein its explanation. Kant, it will be remembered, agrees with those who hold that we are compelled to conceive the existence of God, as "the idea of something on which the supreme and necessary unity of all existence is based": a something "which we represent to ourselves as standing in a relation to the whole system of phenomena, analogous to that in which phenomena stand to each other." It is merely a translation into philosophical language of the living and life-giving truth whereof Mohammed's mind was full. The Divine Unity making, upholding, governing, perfecting all things, was the rock on which he built. He felt that the mysteries encompassing us are great, are ineffable; but that, however dark to us, they are not darkness in themselves: that at the heart of existence, is Mind, Personality, Law. This is the faith stamped upon every line of the Qu'rān,

* Unthinkable as to the mode; the fact is, of course, thinkable.

inspiring its finest poetry, and piercing through its most turgid rhapsodies, in virtue of which it has been for thirteen centuries a pillar of the cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, guiding, through the wilderness of life, countless millions of our race.

Such was Mohammed's Theism. His ethics flowed from it. Of Islām we may say, borrowing a phrase from Neander, that "das Bewusstsein der Abhängigkeit von Gott der Grundton ist." But this dependence upon the Infinite and Eternal does not imply fatalism. I fully agree with Seyd Ameer Ali that fatalism, in the proper sense of the word, has no place in Mohammed's doctrine, although it was largely infused therein by his disciples. That everywhere there reigns an inexorable order, that the supreme duty of man is to apprehend it and to conform to it—this is the great truth which gifted souls in all ages, and of all creeds, have, more or less clearly, apprehended and set forth. It is "the law ruling in the three worlds," which is the underlying thought of Gotama's teaching: it is that "Queen and Mistress of mortals and immortals," which Pindar celebrates. It is that law which Hooker called "the voice of God," and which he cannot abrogate, for "He cannot deny Himself." And this law is summed up for Islām in the pregnant words "Allah akbar." Religion meant for Mohammed submission to the will of a moral Governor of the universe. And what is that will but what we commonly call

destiny? To accept what is allotted to us in this life, humbly and trustingly, doing the duty which lies before us, is what "Allah akbar" really means. Between this, and the mechanical Determinism just now so popular, which excludes alike Providence and Free-will, there is an abyss. That is real fatalism. And from it Mohammed would have shrunk in horror, as a blasphemy at which—to use his own emphatic words—"the heavens might tear open and the earth cleave asunder." The existence of God and the free will of man are the postulates on which all his teaching is based. The two truths are inseparably connected. It is by the attribute of free will that we hold of the Divine. "Est Deus in nobis."

We may fully admit, then, the value of the great fundamental truths taught by Mohammed. But Christianity possesses them as fully as Islām. And it possesses, in rich abundance, much else which Islām does not possess. M. Renan has well pointed out that while Islām sums up, with an unexampled unity, the moral, religious, and æsthetic ideas, in a word, the whole spiritual life of a great family of humanity—it lacks "that gift of fascination, strange, mysterious, truly divine, which has united all civilized mankind, without distinction of race, in the veneration of one and the same ideal issuing from Judæa." * This, in truth, is the incommunicable

* *Études d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 295.

prerogative of Christianity, marking it off by a difference, not of degree but of kind, from all the other religions of the world. In contemplating the Divine Figure set before us in the Gospels, one seems to be borne beyond phenomena; to gaze, if but for a moment, straight into the transcendent realms of spirit and deity; nay, in a sense, to taste and touch eternal realities, so as almost to warrant us in speaking with St. John, of "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life." There is a universe between the crude realism of Mohammed and the perfect idealism of Him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." In Him we have the all-sufficient Standard, the absolute Pattern of human life. Time and space do not condition him. Every generation has found in Him the type which fulfils its highest aspirations, inspires its deepest devotion, satisfies its innermost needs. Of His fulness have eighteen centuries received. And He is still the source and fount of all that is purest and noblest in modern civilization. Syed Ameer Ali regards it as a fundamental defect in Christianity that the work of its Founder was left unfinished; that His teachings were not placed upon a more systematic basis by Himself; and contrasts with this inchoate achievement, "the complete though simpler system of Mohammed." But, in truth, the very simplicity of Islām is the

cause of its intellectual barrenness. Neither poetry, nor philosophy, nor science has taken deep root in its thin soil. It has no principle of development. It is monotonous and inflexible. But to live is to change. And the fact that the Founder of Christianity inculcated principles rather than laid down rules, is one main source of its marvellous fecundity. The Divine word spoken in Galilee was the seed which was to assimilate nourishment from all sides, and to spring up and bring forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold, in the varying soils that received it. Islām is certainly one of the poorest of religions. As certainly Christianity is the richest: "rich with the spoils of time" as treasured in Hebrew theology, Greek philosophy, Roman jurisprudence, Teutonic and Celtic traditions. It is the heir of all the ages, and the nursing mother of all the higher forms of moral and spiritual life. Truly the kingdom of its Founder is not of this world. His throne is established for ever in the religious and ethical consciousness of mankind. "Thronus tuus, Deus, in sæculum seculi; virga æquitatis, virga regni tui."

So much might suffice to show why Syed Ameer Ali's view of the comparative merits of Islām and Christianity seems to me untenable. But there is one word more which ought to be said on this subject. I described him in an earlier portion of this Chapter as well entitled, by his eminent position and wide culture, to be the spokesman of the fifty

millions of Mohammedans who owe allegiance to the Empress of India. And so he certainly is. But, as certainly, the creed which he advocates would hardly be recognised as their own by the vast majority of those fifty millions. It is a sort of sublimated essence of Mohammedanism, a rationalized Islām, bearing much the same relation to the beliefs of orthodox Moslems, whether Sunnis or Shiahs, as the religious opinions held, let us say, by M. Renan bear to the beliefs of the great mass of Christians, whether Catholic, Greek, or Protestant. M. Renan, it should be noted, did not renounce the name of Christian. "Dieu nous garde," he writes, "de répudier ce beau nom de chrétien qui nous met en rapport avec Jésus et l'idéal de l'Évangile, avec l'Église et tous les trésors de sainteté qu'elle a produits." * Well, if M. Renan liked to call himself a Christian, he was, I suppose, at liberty to do so. And I have no sort of objection to make against Syed Ameer Ali calling himself a Mohammedan. Nay, I am not concerned to deny that it is possible to be Christian or Moslem *quoad* the sum of things and the soul in them: "sub specie æternitatis," if I may be permitted so to speak. But Christianity and Islām are existing facts in the world's history. And an apologist for either must deal with them as existing facts; must take them as they are, not as

* *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire Religieuse*, p. 11.

he thinks they ought to be. I am far from denying that, taking Islām as it is, there may still lie before it centuries of fruitful activity in idealising life, and in strengthening the sacred claims of duty, among the populations which now profess it; in expelling from many dark places of the earth, which shall embrace it, barbarous and impure fetichism; and in training millions of its converts to better things by its doctrines of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Still, allowing all this, we must surely say that it is the religion not of a high but of low civilization; destined, in the long run, to give way to a nobler faith. It is on the family that civilization is based. And the conception of the family which Mohammed has stereotyped is incompatible with the higher stages of human development. The charge so lightly passed over by Syed Ameer Ali, that Islām "has degraded the female sex," rests upon only too good grounds. Perfectly true it is that Mohammed, by his matrimonial legislation, curbed the unlimited sexual licence which he found prevailing in Arabia. It is equally true that his partial reform, exhibited as the true norm of the relations between the sexes, has been an insuperable obstacle to the vindication of woman's personality, and to the elevation of her office, in the nations which have received his faith. Cardinal Lavigerie, an unsuspected witness, has left us

his testimony that the Mussulman women of Central and Northern Africa "are scarcely human beings in the eyes of the men who oppress them"; that "they are born slaves, and are from infancy deprived of all moral ideals; that they are brought up as they have to live, merely as animals, with only two sentiments in their heart—sensuality and fear." No doubt those regions of the earth exhibit Islām at its worst. But certain it is, that in no Mohammedan country is woman's rightful place assigned to her; and no less certain is it that a social system which refuses to her that place can never advance beyond semi-barbarism. This is the blot upon Mohammedanism which no skill of advocacy can efface. This is the cancer which no reformer's knife can ever eradicate. For we must not suppose, with Syed Ameer Ali, that the position of women among Moslems is a mere excrescence upon Mohammed's system. It proceeds, as an inevitable consequence, from the essential defect in the conception whereon that system is based. I know not who has pointed this out with greater clearness or power than Mr. Maurice in words—certainly among the best that ever proceeded from his gifted pen—which may fitly serve to conclude this Chapter. Recognising, no less fully than I have done, the greatness and vitality of the Theistic doctrine upon which Islām rests, he rightly insists that "man has demands for him-

self which will not be satisfied by being told that he is the servant of an absolute Will," and proceeds :—

"See now how all that gave glory and dignity to this system becomes, from its want of some other element, the very cause of its degradation. The absolute government of the unseen Being had presented itself to the Mussulman, in every age, in the absolute, visible government of his caliph or sultan. While the divine feeling was strong and alive, the subjection to the human rule was an affectionate, dutiful, entire submission. The ruler was, in very deed, the centre of his warriors. He felt towards them as a protector, sharing their toils, bound to the same Master, enduring hardships in the same cause. But the battle over, he becomes the absolute monarch in the midst of his seraglio—they are merely his slaves. There is no such connection between him and the Being whom he worships as permanently to check this tendency—to make the monarch feel that he is set over them to do them good, or the subjects that they have an appeal against him to a higher Ruler. The very nature of the Ottoman Government—and that government is the perfect development of the Mohammedan idea—excludes the possibility of orders and gradations in society. Its strength lies in all being simple subjects of the one ruler; holding their offices not in virtue of any hereditary ranks or privileges, but only at his pleasure. When, therefore, the one principle which quickened the whole society waxes feeble, of necessity it becomes the most intolerable of despotisms. Elsewhere there is a balance and conflict of powers, which even in the dreariest periods produces struggles or paroxysms of life; here, if the monarch do not inspire his people with strength, all is dead. And the same cause which destroys what may be called the family bonds of civil society, destroys equally the family itself. Polygamy is no accident of Mohammedanism: a careful consideration of the system will show that it must fall to pieces the moment any reformer shall attempt to remove this characteristic of it." *

* *The Religions of the World and their Relation to Christianity*, p. 29.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTENDOM.

One great difference between Christianity and Islām is indicated by the words of Mr. Maurice which I quoted on the preceding page. It is a fundamental idea of Christianity that "man has demands for himself which will not be satisfied by being told that he is the servant of an absolute will." Christianity is the perfect law of liberty; and the obedience which it demands is not the mechanical acquiescence of slaves, but the reasonable service of freemen. It is based upon the claims and prerogatives of conscience. It teaches that every member of the human race is, by an indefeasible divine right, independent of all earthly power in that sacred domain, and responsible to Him only whom it is better to obey than man. In Christianity alone has been found a force able to destroy the domination of the State over the immaterial part of our nature. The separation between temporal and spiritual authority was its great gift to civilization, a gift purchased with the blood of its Founder and of His countless martyrs.

The conception of the Church as a divine kingdom, distinct from, though existing side by side with the kingdoms of this world, is its unique characteristic. And this conception, realised as a fact, it was, which rendered Christianity so detested by the rulers of the Roman Empire, even the best and the wisest among them. It was not as a set of theological beliefs, held by individual persons, but as a Church, that the new religion was the object of persecution. The Imperial Government hated it as a rival and vigorously endeavoured to exterminate it. The endeavour failed. The might of Rome yielded to "the invincible nation" * which Christianity had created. The Empire decayed. The Church grew. And at last the sagacious mind of Constantine conceived the thought of using the new spiritual commonwealth as a bond to hold together his shattered realm. For a brief while, under that great prince and his immediate successors, this policy was successful. Christianity no doubt delayed the fall of the Roman Empire. But it was reserved for a later time to witness the complete alliance of the Catholic Church and the Christian State. That alliance—the special feature and the chief interest of the Middle Ages—will be the subject of this Chapter.

The almost total neglect and absolute discredit to

* *τὸ ἄμαχον γένος.* The expression is St. Chrysostom's.

which the period intervening between the Renaissance and the fall of Paganism was consigned during the last three centuries, is one of the most singular phenomena of history. The prevailing tradition was that it was a "millennium of darkness," of mere savagery and ignorance, in which the sun of civilization was under an eclipse—a "misty time," an "uncivil age," as Sir Philip Sidney speaks, in his *Defence of Poesy*, overhung with "dust and cobwebs." And from his time to almost within our own day, the "dust and cobwebs" remained undisturbed; medieval history, if investigated at all, was approached with prepossessions fatal to intelligent study, and was regarded as a barren field, worthy only of the musty toils of antiquarianism; medieval institutions were misunderstood and were ignorantly condemned; even the monuments of medieval art, on which, as it would seem to us, the evidence of the greatness of those ages is so plainly written, shared in the indiscriminating disdain heaped upon them. Not much more than a century ago one of the literary chiefs of the day, writing of the most glorious of English churches, observes that its "external appearance cannot be but displeasing to the eye of every man who has any idea of propriety or proportion, even though he may be ignorant of architecture as a science"; * and this

* *Smollett's Works*, vol. xi. p. 246, edition 1824.

judgment of York Minster is correct enough, according to the canons of criticism then prevailing.*

Indeed, it was fortunate when the taste of the age contented itself with mere verbal expressions of its hostility to the priceless relics of mediæval art. Too frequently such sentiments were translated into action, to the irreparable loss of future generations. Thus, in the centre of the Christian world, the very piety of the Pontiffs was converted into an instrument of destruction, and august sanctuaries underwent a process of transformation, fatal alike to their pristine beauty and to their historical associations. Even the venerable Lateran Basilica did not escape. The alterations of Borromini and the additions of Galilei have so completely destroyed the original character of the "mother and mistress of all the churches," that it is now most difficult for us to figure to ourselves the edifice which Clement V. restored and which Giotto decorated. Nor was it only to the architectural glories of the Middle Ages that this process was applied. The "lofty rhyme," in which so many generations of saints had enshrined their

* In his *Travels through France and Italy*, Smollett remarks, "The implements of Popish superstition, such as relics of pretended saints, ill-proportioned spires and belfries, and the nauseous repetition of the figure of the cross, which is in itself a very mean and disagreeable object, only fit for the prisons of condemned criminals, have contributed to introduce a vicious taste into the external architecture, as well as in the internal ornaments of our temples." (Vol. x. p. 295.)

highest aspirations and their deepest experiences, was stretched upon the Procrustean bed of classical metre, and was hopelessly mangled and mutilated to satisfy the tyrannical requirements of the dominant fashion. The plain song of the Catholic Church was happier than her hymns, inasmuch as it was the object of deeper contempt, and, by utter neglect, escaped "reformation." Painting fared no better than the sister arts. The works of the great masters of the medieval schools were abandoned to dishonour and decay. They were without meaning for generations who could conceive of no sublimer mission for a painter than to minister to the senses by the delineation of the visible; whose highest artistic aspirations were satisfied by the pompous inanities of the Maniéristes, the pretty imbecilities of the Paysagistes, or the vulgar trivialities of the Genristes.

These were some of the evidences and fruits of the great tradition as to the darkness and barbarism of the Middle Ages which so long maintained an undisputed reign throughout Europe. The first attempt at questioning its sway may perhaps be traced to that dilettante school of which the most considerable representatives in England were Horace Walpole and Gray; men who are entitled to our respect for their genuine though ill-instructed admiration of the monuments of medieval architecture, and to our warmest gratitude for their earnest protests against the "rage of repairing, beautifying, whitewashing, painting, and gilding,

which threatened to be little less fatal"* to those venerable structures "than the Reformation and the Civil Wars." It is observable, however, that nothing like a serious study of the medieval period seems to have been dreamt of even by Gray. He delights, indeed, in Froissart; so delights in him, he says† in one of his letters, that at one time he "can read nothing else;" but he is evidently half ashamed of his devotion to this "Herodotus of a barbarous age."‡ So Percy, who did excellent service by publishing his *Reliques*, when dedicating the volume to the Countess of Northumberland, speaks deprecatingly of them as the "barbarous productions of unpolished ages," "that had been almost lost to memory had not the gallant deeds of" that lady's "illustrious ancestors preserved them from oblivion."

Percy's *Reliques*, which appeared in 1765, were not at first highly appreciated by English critics, but in Germany they obtained a speedy success through the labours of Bürger and other translators and imitators.§ Eight years afterwards a far more

* See Gray's Letter to the Rev. Mr. Bentham, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 74 (Pickering's edition).

† Vol. v. p. 116. See, also, vol. iii. p. 230.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 190.

§ See Wordsworth's Essay, in vol. vi. of Moxon's Centenary edition of his *Works*, p. 373. "Germany is much indebted to Percy's 'Reliques,'" Wordsworth remarks: "and, for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think there is an able writer in verse of the present day,

significant indication of the breaking up of the old tradition proceeded from a young law-student of Frankfort, who was destined in later years to exercise an unrivalled influence over the higher thought of Europe, and to occupy, by an unquestioned title, its intellectual throne. Goethe's first work, *Götz von Berlichingen*, was given to the world in 1773, and, as Carlyle has justly remarked, "it stands prominent among the causes, or at the very least among the signals, of a great change in modern literature." * Not only was it "the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances," in its own country, but it aroused the genius of Sir Walter Scott, whose first literary enterprise was a translation of it; and thus it may, in some sense, be regarded as the beginning of the romanticist school, of which his is still the most popular and indeed the greatest name. Scott's romances of chivalry, whether metrical or prose, are indeed far enough from being true pictures of the times in which their scene is laid. He is the most charming of story-tellers: he realized vividly the picturesque aspects of the age of chivalry, and he used them most effectively to colour his narratives. It is an ungracious task to use language

who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the 'Reliques'; and for myself, I am happy on this occasion to make a public avowal of my own" (p. 377).

* *Miscel.*, vol. i. p. 341.

sounding like disparagement with regard to compositions which have so strong a claim on our gratitude as the delight of boyhood, and the solace of many an hour of ennui or pain in maturer life. Still it must be confessed that, if tried by a severe standard, and apart from the circumstances of the age when they were given to the world, all the praise that can honestly be bestowed upon them ends here. Their knights and barons and abbots no more resemble the real warriors and churchmen of the Middle Ages than Fonthill Abbey resembled a medieval religious house. But Fonthill Abbey was not without its merits, and, like the *Waverley Novels*, it marked an immense advance upon the age of Strawberry Hill and the *Castle of Otranto*.

Superficial, however, as Sir Walter Scott's sketches of the medieval period are, they were of immense service in awakening public interest in that period, and have been fruitful in results the practical importance of which it is not easy to overrate. "The general want of something deeper and more attractive than what had offered itself elsewhere," remarks one who speaks with peculiar authority on this matter, "may be considered to have led to his popularity, and by means of his popularity he reacted on his readers, stimulating their mental thirst, feeding their hopes, setting before them visions, which, when once seen, are not easily forgotten." *

* Cardinal Newman's *Essays, Crit. and Hist.*, vol. i. p. 267.

Another writer less widely popular, but of far higher claims than Scott, was at the same time exerting a vast influence in the same direction over the most cultivated minds of his day. The poems of Wordsworth are full of evidence how deeply he felt the spell of the ages of faith, how his strong poetic vision, piercing through the cloud of misconceptions which had so long encompassed them, discerned, at all events in outline, the tokens of their true greatness and glory.

Scott, then, and Wordsworth are conspicuous among the instruments and evidences of the decline among us of the old evil tradition regarding the medieval period and of the growth of a different tone of thought regarding them. The first English historian of this century who made a serious effort to judge them fairly was Hallam. And his book, though written nearly eighty years ago, with scanty materials, and after slender studies, is still not without a certain value. How much has been done during those eighty years by scholars in every European country for all the epochs of the Middle Ages, to purge away the old darkness and to let in the light of science, I will not attempt to describe. The net result is that materials are now available from which the student, who knows how to use them, may derive a pretty accurate conception of human life and its conditions, in the different periods and regions of medieval Europe. And here I shall take leave to offer a few sugges-

tions, derived from my own experience, which may possibly be of service to others.*

First, then, I would observe that the great rock upon which most students strike is generalization. The vulgar error is to regard the Middle Ages as an organic whole presenting the same social and political characteristics throughout. But it is equally a mistake to allow the constant changes, of almost every kind, in the condition of Europe, traceable from the beginning of the ninth to the middle of the fifteenth century,—which I take to be the true limits of the medieval period,—to obscure the fact that from one, and that a most im-

* It is instructive to recall how Hallam, with his usual candour, tells us that he "hardly pretends to any direct acquaintance" with the works in which are the original sources of medieval history.—*Middle Ages*, iii. p. 290, n. q. His chief modern authority for the contest between the Papacy and the Empire is Schmidt's *Hist. des Allemands.*—*Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 236, n. k. Of the great philosophical and theological writers whose influence over medieval thought was so vast, he knew next to nothing; he expresses his surprise at having, "within a short time met with four living English writers who had read parts of Thomas Aquinas," but cannot bring himself to think that there are four more in this country who can say the same.—*Ibid.*, iii. p. 428, n. i. It is observable that, in a note dated 1848, he confesses his fear that he has "fallen a little too much into the fashion of exaggerating the crimes and follies of the Middle Ages,"—a fashion which, he justly adds, "prevailed in the eighteenth century."—*Ibid.*, iii. p. 301, n. o.

portant point of view, those centuries may properly be regarded as a whole. Between these two opposite and fundamental errors, there exists the ground for almost every variety of misconception, and it is hardly too much to say that every variety of misconception may be met with. There are, indeed, few writers of the present day, possessing any pretensions to scholarship, who are blind to the constant mutations in the public order, the diverse and conflicting currents of thought, the steady widening of the field of private enterprise and personal action, during those seven hundred years. But there are many who found themselves on one or two authorities, and who look through their spectacles at their contemporaries, or at the whole medieval period; many more who mistake local for general customs, and draw universal conclusions from particular premises. Thus, to take an example from a writer who has deservedly won much popularity, Green, in his *Short History of the English People*, writes thus of Walter de Map: "Picture after picture strips the veil from the corruption of the medieval Church, its indolence, its thirst for gain, its secret immorality." * Now, putting aside, for the present, the question as to the value of the testimony of a writer like Walter de Map, regarding the ecclesiastical abuses of his time, it is quite certain that his

* *Short History of the English People*, p. 120.

evidence, even if accepted without reserve, is utterly inadequate to the sweeping condemnation of "the medieval Church" which Mr. Green founded upon it. Or, to ascend to a higher authority, Mr. Furnivall in a note to Dr. Brentano's admirable essay on the history and development of Gilds,* talks of "the days of Chaucer and Wyckliffe, of William who had the vision of Piers the Plowman, and others, who have left us records of what Romanism, with its monks and friars, practically then was in England." The designation of fourteenth century Catholicism as "Romanism," is not very happy; but, without dwelling upon that, it may surely be objected, with the plainest justice, that the testimony of a theological writer notoriously disaffected to the Church, and of two satirical poets, however great their literary excellence, is hardly conclusive as to what the Catholic religion practically was in their time. I quite allow, as will be seen in my next Chapter, that there was much corruption of life among "monks and friars" at the period in question. Still the charges of the religious innovator ought to be received with the greatest caution; and as regards Piers Plowman and Chaucer we should remember Gray's very sensible remark, that it was "the custom of those

* *The Original Ordinances of more than one hundred English Gilds, &c.*, edited by the late Toulmin Smith, with a preliminary essay, in five parts, by Lujo Brentano. Published for the Early English Text Society. Int., p. lxxxvi.

times," that "satire and irony should fall either upon the women or upon the clergy."* In point of fact, the former of those classes is, at the least, as severely dealt with by medieval poets and story-tellers as the latter. No one, however, would think, I suppose—I am sure Mr. Furnivall would not think—of drawing thence a general conclusion as to the unchastity of the female sex at the epoch in question. Why should different measure be dealt to the ecclesiastical order?

Hallam carries this species of generalization still further. In a long passage "on the vices of the monks and clergy," which aptly ends with the garbled passage from St. Eloy—long the stock quotation on the subject—he remarks, "I know not by what right we should disbelieve the documents of the visitation under Henry VIII."; and from these reports, together with "the solemn declaration of councils, the reports of judicial inquiry, the casual evidence of common fame in

* *Works*, vol. v. p. 310. Gray gives the following account of "the causes which directed the satire of our old writers to these two objects." "As the religious were the principal scholars of their age, they probably gave the tone in writing or in wit to the rest of the nation. The celibacy imposed upon them by the Church had soured their temper, and naturally disposed them (as is observed of old bachelors in our day) to make the weaknesses of the other sex their theme; and though every one had a profound respect for his own particular order, yet the feuds and bickerings between one order and another were perpetual and irreconcilable."

the ballad and romance," and "the farrago of evidence in Fosbrooke's 'British Monachism,'" * he draws a conclusion as to the "general corruption of monastic institutions" in the Middle Ages. The evidence establishing the abandoned character of Henry VIII.'s "Visitors," was not brought to light until long after Hallam wrote: still, the fable of the wolf and the lamb might have suggested a reason for hesitation as to the value of their reports. That scandals did exist in religious houses, from time to time, during the Middle Ages, no candid person would seek to deny. There is conclusive evidence of the fact in the public documents referred to by Mr. Hallam, and elsewhere. But to draw from such occasional derelictions from their high standard, and from the testimony of officials expressly hired to work their destruction by Henry VIII., the inference of the "corruption" of those institutions throughout the Middle Ages, is most unwarrantable. The error of generalizing from particular customs is as common as that of generalizing from particular authorities, and forcibly illustrates Mill's sagacious remark, that the "besetting danger" of the "student of man and society" is "not so much of embracing falsehood for truth, as of mistaking part of the truth for the whole." † It would be easy to adduce examples of that fault; but, perhaps, it is not worth while so to encumber these pages. The reader may

* *Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 303.

† *Dissert. and Discus.*, vol. i. p. 399.

find them in sufficient abundance in a voluminous history of France given to the world by an author who has "obtained great pensions and great praise," M. Henri Martin, and he will be greatly aided in his search by a temperate and well-written little volume of *Critiques et Réfutations*, by M. de l'Épinoz, in which many of M. Martin's errors are pointed out. M. de l'Épinoz aptly quotes * the following weighty reflections of Biot:—"Quand les écrivains modernes mentionnent quelque usage local, quelque particularité isolée du moyen âge, c'est presque toujours pour en prendre occasion de les faire contraster, en bien ou en mal, avec ce qui existe aujourd'hui. De pareils rapprochements sont en général faux dans leur principe et sans justesse dans leurs conséquences . . . Tachons," Biot adds, "que notre philosophie ait la patience de bien connaître ces faits avant de se mettre à les juger." It may be added that "to be well acquainted with the facts" is no easy task. Feudal customs were exceedingly diversified, especially in France, where, as Beaumanoir tells us, "on ne pourroit pas trouver deux chasteleries qui de toz cas uzassent d'une meisme coustume." †

The student of medieval history will then require to be ever on his guard against rashly generalizing from particular authorities or customs. He will ever also keep in view the great fact that the

* P. 111. † Page 107.

period which we call the Middle Ages divides itself into many epochs, each possessing peculiar and distinguishing features, and each differing from the rest, both in point of time and character, in the various regions of Europe. The scene which presents itself to us when we first try to take (in Hallam's phrase) "a view of Europe during the Middle Ages," is striking but illusory. Like the man in the Gospel whose eyes were opened, we see "men as trees walking." All is enveloped in mist, and is not without a certain misty grandeur; nor are our conceptions ever likely to be clearer and more real unless we rigidly apply to our investigations the rules of intellectual discipline. A good example of the notions of the medieval period which ardent but unscientific research is likely to produce, is supplied by Digby's *Mores Catholici*. As we fall under the spell of those fascinating volumes the centuries swim before our eyes; we are transported from one end of Europe to the other: time and space are annihilated for us by the author's happy magic. It is delightful, but it is not history;* as indeed it hardly professes to be. The laws of historical science are severe, and one of the most fundamental of them is a rigid attention to local and chronological limits. It is only when the student learns

* This is very largely true of the writings of Montalambert, who, significantly enough, judged Digby's book "le livre le plus propre à faire connâitre et aimer le moyen âge,"

the connection of part with part; separates what is in progress from what does not move; abstracts, analyzes, and defines, that the dimness of his mind's eye is removed; in the mighty maze he traces the plan, and the kaleidoscope becomes a picture. Of course, some central point is necessary to him round which to group the objects which present themselves. The point may be differently chosen; but obviously the choice of it is a matter of much importance. And that brings me to the especial theme of this Chapter.

It appears to me that the only way of obtaining a just view of European history during the medieval period is by regarding it in the light of its dominant idea. There is one great fact running through it to which it owes its entity as a period, and which is imprinted on all its epochs, authorities, and customs: that fact is, the prevalence of Catholic unity. Medieval history is beyond and before all things the history of the growth, empire, and decline of the idea which is conventionally expressed by the word Christendom, and the perpetual recognition of this fact is essential to its philosophical study.* This idea was the principal

* This appears to have, more or less, struck Hallam. "No one," he writes, "can take a philosophical view of the Middle Ages without attending more than is at present fashionable to their ecclesiastical history."—*Mid. Ages*, vol. iii. p. 299,

factor in European civilization, from the time when it was distinctly manifested to the world by Leo III. and Charles the Great, to the time when the great religious and political changes associated with the names of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation proclaimed its downfall to a generation which little understood the tidings. Here, too, it holds good :—

> "The ample proposition, that hope makes
> In all designs begun on earth below,
> Fails in the promised largeness: checks and disasters
> Grow in the veins of actions highest reared."

Of the "promised largeness," indeed, we find some realization in the two centuries and a half from St. Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII. The rest of the history is full of "checks and disasters." The chronicle of the two centuries from the death of Nicholas I. is little more than a tissue of catastrophes. The social order only emerged from the chaos* (to use Guizot's expression) which had engulfed it after the death of Charles the Great to enter into the feudal system. Christian bishops were metamorphosed into military barons; ecclesiastical unity seemed to be breaking up into local, partial, and individual distributions. "The period was distinguished for the greatest abuses of simony, for the completest arbitrary disposition of ecclesias

* *Lect. on Civilization*, vi.

tical benefices, and for the most deplorable corruption among the priests." * In the see of Peter it is, at times, hard to recognize the Apostolic lineaments, and, under more than one Pontiff, the Lateran Palace became infamous for scandals parallel to those of the sons of Eli. But throughout these evil times the idea of Christendom was silently growing. The revival of imperial authority under Otto the Great delivered the Papacy from its bondage to the Tusculan barons and vindicated its œcumenical character. To the moral reform initiated by the great Cluniac congregation, it owed that "new light which seemed to have risen for the world" † in St. Leo IX.: it owed that lover of righteousness and hater of iniquity, St. Gregory VII., whose destined work it was to rescue liberty of conscience —the most precious of all our liberties—at a very critical moment in European history, the turning point of the Middle Ages.‡

Far otherwise was it in the ever-thickening gloom of the last century and a half of the medieval period. The steady dying out from society of the supernatural principles on which so many generations had lived, and the constant advance of a revived Paganism, are

* *Ibid.*

† It is his contemporary Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino—afterwards Pope under the title of Victor III.—who thus writes of Leo. *Dialog.*, i. 3.

‡ See my *Chapters in European History*, chap. ii., "The Turning Point of the Middle Ages."

conspicuous notes of those times: and their course is faithfully imaged in the story of the Papacy. The Apostolic Chair removed from Rome, and its occupant subjected to the influence of the French monarchy: then its disputed possession, and the household of faith distracted by the Great Schism; and, lastly, its almost complete secularization—such are the three successive steps in the degradation of the Papacy, which mark accurately the stages in the decay of the idea of Christendom. Far more dreary is this age than that earlier period which Baronius* has so severely characterized; for then beneath rank exterior corruption and the similitude of death, the idea was germinating until the time appointed for its bursting forth into full life under the Hildebrandine reformation. Here is the reality of decay: and the issue is the destruction of the religious unity of Europe. It is, however, with that unity, as still existing, that I am concerned in this Chapter: and the point immediately before us is the importance, in the study of the medieval period, of ever keeping it in view as the cardinal fact running throughout that period. I proceed to offer a few remarks in elucidation of this point.

The history of the world presents us with three distinct conceptions of the relation of religion to human society, conceptions which, for our present

* *Annales*, ad ann. 900.

purpose, may be designated the ancient, the medieval, and the modern. The chief characteristics of these conceptions are respectively nationality, universality, and individuality. In the political communities of antiquity religion played a very important part. The state is, as a matter of fact, the expanded family, and the patriarchal principle that the paterfamilias is the religious as well as the civil head of his house, naturally extended itself to the community in primitive times. The conception of an atheistic state without recognised gods and sacred rites would have appeared monstrous to the ancients. The public profession of a religion was deemed essential to corporate existence; it was both the basis on which political communities rested and the tie which held them together. Thus Plato, in his *Republic*,* describes "the erection of temples and the appointment of sacrifices and other ceremonies in honour of the gods," and "all the observances we must adopt in order to propitiate the inhabitants of the other world," as "the most momentous, the most august, and the highest acts of legislation"; and Cicero held the greatness of Rome to be built "upon piety and religion, and on the one wisdom of recognising that all things are ordered and governed by the power of the immortal gods." † Very numerous passages to a similar effect might

* Book iv. c. v.

† *De Har. Res.*, 9.

be quoted from other classical writers of Greece and Rome. It should be observed that this public profession of religion was strictly national, a nation being a community united by the fact or the fiction of blood relationships. No dream of any system of religion wider than race cults ever crossed the mind of the ancient world. "The heathen religions," writes Jowett, "were the bonds of nations and of society, giving majesty to kings and authority to laws, linking men together in common acts of worship, arising out of an inward necessity for communion of gods and men, just as language is a necessity of the social state. As the religions, not of individuals, but of nations, . . . they could not but be political and local in their character." *

Such was the conception of religion which obtained in the ancient world. The conception now most widely prevailing among us is its exact contrary, and regards religion purely as a matter of individual concern. This is, indeed, the legitimate, nay, the necessary outcome of what is loosely called the principle of private judgment. I am well aware that those to whom we owe the introduction of this principle into the religious sphere by no means intended such a result. The design

* I have mislaid my reference to this passage, and, curiously enough, Mr. Jowett could not give it me. "The words are certainly mine" he wrote, "but I do not in the least remember where they occur."

of the authors of the Protestant Reformation incontestably was to revert to the pre-Christian system of national religions. Such religions, it was justly considered, might serve as useful appendages to government, and might play much the same part in the politics of the modern world as that which they played in the politics of antiquity. But ideas develop themselves according to laws of their own, and live on after their authors, working oftentimes the destruction of the institutions they were at first used to support. The neo-Christianity of the Reformation has been largely fatal to the churches which the reformers established. It has tended more and more to reduce religion from an objective fact to a subjective speculation, to make it a mere private thing for each man's own conscience.

I shall have to touch again upon this subject, in my Sixth Chapter. I am here specially concerned with the great and distinguishing peculiarity of the Middle Ages, which is this: that in them, throughout Europe, the whole structure of man's life, both public and private, was built upon religion. In the utter wreck of society which followed upon the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the several states constructed from its fragments, although originally Pagan or Arian, had eventually submitted to the Catholic Church, receiving from her the Divine Law as the rule of their institutions and the basis of their legislation; and she had crowned the

edifice when her Supreme Pontiff chose the great monarch of the Franks as her "Advocate," investing him with the majesty of the Cæsars, and "anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*" In the Middle Ages, then, the religion of Europe was individual: it could not but be so, for it dealt primarily with each man's conscience: its call was personally addressed to each soul. But that call was into a spiritual kingdom, in which each soul found its own portion and inheritance. Thus the medieval conception of religion was also national: all Christian men were "cives sanctorum," subjects of the "Civitas Dei," the world-

* "I must call your attention to a fact which stands at the head of all others, and characterizes the Christian Church in general—a fact which, so to speak, has decided its destiny. This fact is the unity of the Church, the unity of the Christian society, irrespectively of all diversities of time, of place, of power, of language, of origin. Wonderful phenomenon! It is just at the moment when the Roman Empire is breaking up and disappearing that the Christian Church gathers itself up and takes its definite form. Political unity perishes, religious unity emerges. Populations endlessly different in origin, habits, speech, destiny, rush upon the scene; all becomes local and partial; every enlarged idea, every general institution, every great social arrangement is lost sight of; and in this moment this Christian Church proclaims most loudly the unity of its teaching, the universality of its law. And from the bosom of the most frightful disorder the world has ever seen has arisen the largest and purest idea, perhaps, which ever drew men together,—the idea of a spiritual society."—Guizot, Lec. XII. p. 230.

wide kingdom of Him to whom had been given "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." And as in the ancient world, so in the medieval, the notion of citizenship was based upon the family. The "populus Dei," was a "gens sancta," into which men were admitted by the new birth of baptism: the members of this "gens" were "domestici Dei," and the first of facts to them was their place in His family. Hence Christendom, rather than the particular region of it in which they happened to dwell, was regarded as their true country and the first object of their patriotism. The rigid lines of demarcation which in the ancient world had separated races, and had made the words stranger and enemy synonymous, were broken down. The phrase "Christian commonwealth" was a reality, and the several European states were sections of it. For the first time in the world's history, as a learned writer has well observed, "We see not merely man, but humanity. The citizen and the helot, Greeks and barbarians have disappeared: and in their place is a family of brothers, with one Divine Father." *

This, then, was the idea of Christendom, an idea which, as I have pointed out, in its several stages

* "Si non vide pur l' uomo, ma l'humanità: nè pur apparvero il citadino e l' ilota, i greci ed i barbari, ma si vide una famiglia di fratelli con l'unico padre ch' è Dio."—De Renzi, *Collectio Salernitana*, vol. i. p. 6.

of existence and differing degrees of vitality, rules throughout the medieval period. It is an idea not easy for us to grasp, because, as Mr. Bryce has admirably remarked, "Here, as in so many other cases, the continued use of traditional language seems to have prevented us from seeing how great is the difference between our own times and those in which the phrases we repeat were first used, and used in full sincerity." Men "do not, cannot, understand the intense fascination which the idea of one all-pervading Church exercised upon their medieval forefathers." * The prevalence of religious unity in undoubting submission to the teaching of this all-pervading Church is the chief note of the Middle Ages. Whatever men questioned, they did not question that; whatever they were at issue about, they were at one on that subject. That the Catholic religion was the complete revelation of the will of God, the supreme test of right and wrong, the absolute standard of life, whether public, family, or individual, was the cardinal truth, the fundamental axiom of human existence, which men then believed as simply as we now believe the multiplication table. This is the great fact about that period of the world's history, distinctly marking it off from all other periods. The practical consequences of this fact it is hardly possible to overrate. Let me attempt to trace in

* *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 373-4, 8th edition.

the faintest outline a few of the more obvious of them, which, however, obvious as they are, are too frequently overlooked or misapprehended.

The first consequence of the religious unity of the mediæval period on which I shall touch, is the position which, throughout it, was held by the Sovereign Pontiff. The idea of the Papacy, inherent from the beginning, had grown through the ages by an imperceptible and natural process, "occulto velut arbor ævo," to use De Maistre's happy quotation; or, as Cardinal Newman has expressed it, "The Infinite Wisdom, which sees the end from the beginning, in decreeing the rise of an universal empire . . . . decreed the development of a ruler."* Of his independence, the temporal principality, at first unwillingly received, was the instrument and pledge. Dante describes Constantine as founding his new capital on the Bosphorus that "he might give the Shepherd room." Whether or no this was his intention in the transfer of the seat of Empire, such, unquestionably, was its result. Free from the oppressive proximity of the secular ruler, the Pope consolidated his spiritual sovereignty; and Rome became the centre of a vaster realm than any which had owned the Imperial sway, the seat of a monarch

* *Essay on Development*, c. iii. sec. iv. I may perhaps be permitted to say that I think there is not anything more masterly in Cardinal Newman's writings than the fourteen pages in which this point is discussed (pp. 164-179).

invested with more august prerogatives than any associated with the majesty of the Cæsars. "Tu es primatu Abel, gubernatu Noe, patriarchatu Abraham, ordine Melchisedec, dignitate Aaron, autoritate Moyses, judicatu Samuel, potestate Petrus, unctione Christus," * writes St. Bernard to Eugenius III., and these oft-quoted words are not the language of rhetoric; they do but express the serious conviction of Christendom during the well-nigh seven centuries of its existence. Men "saw in the Pope not merely the type, but also the real and highest earthly organ of a power not of this world;" † and although the actual influence of the Papacy varied with the circumstances of the time and the character of the Pontiff, the Chair of the Apostle was ever regarded as the centre of Christendom.

Nothing can be more misleading than the term "foreign power," which a certain school of writers on the medieval period delight to apply to the Holy See. If used with regard to earlier centuries of that period, the phrase is absolutely unmeaning, and in respect of the last century and a half, it must be taken in a very qualified sense.‡ Even

* St. Bernard *de Consid.*, l. ii. c. viii. n. 15.

† *Essays and Reviews*, by R. W. Church, p. 159.

‡ Sanders states that in this country men began to call the Roman Pontiff a foreign power at the time when the clergy were in a *præmunire* for submitting to legatine authority, *i.e.* in 1531.—*De Schis. Ang.*, book i. c. 13.

when the practical authority of the Holy See was at its lowest, the theory of its august prerogatives as the head of the Christian family was unquestioned. Men looked to it, whether they obeyed it or not, as the oracle of the divine law, the organ of the just judgment of God. "It is not matter of theory," writes Dean Church, "but a fact of history, that in the time of which we speak, the cause of the Popes was that of religion and holiness. With whatever amount of mistake, misdoing, or corruption among its supporters—however feebly they may often have realised their own principles—it was based on faith in the Unseen; it resisted and rebuked the world; it set a true value on the things of time."* Hence it was that their legislation, based on a higher reason and principles more righteous than those which informed the customs prevailing with the force of law throughout Europe, obtained general acceptance by its intrinsic excellence. Hence the system of appeals to Rome, often the object of censure as ignorant as it is passionate, was, in spite of vast abuses, the safeguard of Christendom. For there was the recognition of "a standard higher than that of political expediency; a commonly

* Church's *Essays and Reviews*, p. 159. The time of which Dean Church speaks is the time of St. Anselm, but I take leave to adopt his words in a wider sense.

acknowledged law able to reach and visit crimes which national laws were ready to screen or were too weak to punish. An appeal to the See of Rome was not only virtually an appeal to the whole of Christendom, it was also an appeal to the judgment seat of our Lord."*

"The character assigned to the Bishop of Rome by the framers of the canon law," a learned writer has observed, "is as august and venerable as any that it has ever entered into man's imagination to conceive. Europe was considered in their system as one vast moral territory, of which the Pope was the supeme magistrate, on whom the eyes of all were fixed, and to whom every one could appeal as the tutelary and incorruptible guardian of truth and justice. Beyond the reach of the clashing passions and numberless temptations by which the children of men are beset, the sole object of his authority was to secure for every Christian that future happiness which is the certain reward of virtue. For this grand end he promulgated laws dictated by the spirit of unerring wisdom, which prevented crime while they purified intention, and which no one, without violating his duty to the great European family, could venture to disobey. Greater than monarchs by his functions, humbler than the lowest by his inclinations, his officers were peace, and his exactors righteousness. Unlike the reluctant services wrung from their miserable serfs by the oppressors among whom Europe had been cantoned out, the homage which the Pope received from submissive millions was the willing, unforced obedience of grateful children; and the power he exercised was to guide the ignorant in the way, and to protect him that had no helper against the mighty and the terrible. Thus, while the face of Europe was disfigured by a thousand ridiculous and discordant customs, the offsping of violence and barbarity, there was above them all a law transcendent and

* Church's *Essays and Reviews*, p. 159.

sublime, guarded by sanctions which all revered, enforced by an authority which all acknowledged, by which the conqueror and the conquered, the warrior and the peasant, the layman and the priest, nay, by which the judge and the criminal who trembled before the seat of justice, were knit together in one common bond of brotherhood and affection; and if compelled by the perverseness of his subjects, he with whom this divine prerogative had been deposited was obliged to exchange the voice of paternal tenderness for that of admonition and rebuke, he addressed the wanderers like children whom he sought to reclaim, rather than as rebels whom it was his duty to chastise; nor was it till admonition after admonition had been despised, till warning after warning had been set at nought, till entreaty after entreaty had been rejected, that the spiritual sword was at length unsheathed to strike, and that, armed with the same awful power which smote 'Gehazi with a leprosy and Simon Magus with a curse,' the universal bishop and common father of Christian men, amid tears and wailing, cut off the rotten branch to save the tree, and cast out the incorrigible offender from the law's protection, and all intercourse with the species to which he was a reproach. Such was the theory of canon law." *

Hardly less important than the legislative and judicial functions of the Pope, in the ages of faith, was his indirect temporal influence as the guide and father of the Christian family. "Auctoritate Moyses," he was ever interposing between rival States and conflicting parties with the words of the leader of Israel, "Sirs, ye are brethren." It has been justly remarked by Lingard, "Writers have not always sufficiently appreciated the benefits

* "Influence of the Canon Law," by John George Phillimore, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, p. 216.

which mankind derived from the pacific influence of the Roman Pontiffs. In an age which valued no merit but that of arms, Europe would have been plunged in perpetual war had not Pope after Pope laboured incessantly for the preservation or restoration of peace. They rebuked the passions and checked the extravagant pretensions of sovereigns. Their character, as the common fathers of Christians, gave to their representations a weight which no other mediator could claim; and their legates spared neither journey nor fatigue to reconcile the jarring interests of countries, and interpose the olive of peace between the swords of contending armies."* And the same truth has been forcibly expressed by Guizot: "By methods of various kinds," he writes, "the Church strove to check the tendency of society to violence and continual wars. It is matter of notoriety that by the Truce of God, and many measures of the same kind, the Church struggled against the employment of force, and devoted itself to the introduction into society of a greater degree of order and mildness. These facts are so well known," he adds, "that I am spared the trouble of entering into detail regarding them."† But what is too often lost sight of, or imperfectly

**Hist. of England*, vol. iii. chap. iii The occasion of Lingard's remark is the armistice concluded between Edward III. and Philip VI. in 1349, at the instance of Clement VI.

†*Lectures on the Hist. of Civilisation in Europe*, Lect. VI.

apprehended by those who are well acquainted with these facts, is that the exercise of the international influence of the Pope depended upon the religious unity of Christendom. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but spiritual; his power was wholly moral; and its sanctions were found in the consciences and spiritual instincts of men.

Turning from the political and public order of medieval Europe to its civil and domestic life, we find the consequences of their religious unity equally conspicuous and important. This is a subject so large that I shall here only dwell briefly upon one aspect of it—the constructive character of medieval religion. A common creed is a quite unique principle of association. It makes men, as nothing else can, to be "unius moris in domo," of one mind in a house. And this is pre-eminently true of the Catholic religion, with its doctrines of the one origin of the human race, of the brotherhood and spiritual equality of all baptised persons, of the absolute necessity of self-sacrifice, of the impartial justice of God, with His tribunal of penance, before which all must come in this world, and His judgment-seat awaiting all in the next. In common interests and destinies such as these, existing not as opinions or speculations, but as the prime facts of life, men found a bond of common action such as nothing else could supply. The chief obstacles to the unity of the

human race in the Middle Ages were slavery and war. I have already observed how from religious unity sprang efforts, more or less successful, to repress war, or to curtail its duration, or to mitigate its horrors. As to slavery, it was felt, ever more and more deeply as the influence of the Church prevailed, that for a Christian man to hold his Christian brethren in a servile condition was monstrous. And the constant tendency of religion throughout the medieval period was to level the artificial barriers which sever man from man. Guérard has somewhere remarked, "It made a continual appeal to the emancipation of the peoples; it brought the various grades of life together; and although men did not cease to oppress one another, still they regarded themselves as the members of one family, and were led by religious equality to civil and political equality."

But this equality was not the equality of isolation; it was the equality of degree;—the equality of the many members with diverse offices constituting the one body. The Church certainly had no great cause to love the feudal system. It was the stronghold of her oppressors, and supplied the never-failing pretexts for their encroachments on her liberties. For example, "the whole history of the imperial Franconian line is that of one long struggle between the Western Church as represented by the Papacy and the principle of a feudal classification of society . . . . which

threatened to reduce her to the state of a merely human and subordinate institution." * But still, taking that classification as she found it, her endeavour was to bring it under the obedience of faith, and not only to adorn it with those Christian virtues which enter so largely into the ideal of the chivalric character, but also to transform it from a régime of violence and brute force into "a hierarchy of duties;"—duties strictly reciprocal, for while obedience was due from inferiors, provision was in turn no less imperatively due from superiors; of duties consecrated by a religion which was implanted in each soul—the source of its dearest hopes and of its deepest terrors.

And if religious unity was the bond of the medieval frame of civil society (which was not the Church's creation), much more was it the life of those ordinances which owed their origin expressly to her, and by which she sought to counteract the evils of the time, and to ameliorate the condition of mankind. "Grave mother of majestic works," the municipal liberties, the gilds, and confraternities of the Middle Ages sprang directly from her fertile bosom, were made in her image, and breathed her spirit. Beneath the shadow of the Apostolic throne arose that glorious group of Italian republics which maintained the sacred cause of civil freedom and

* Bowden's *Life of Gregory VII.*, vol. i. p. 106. See also vol. ii. p. 49.

religious liberty against Teutonic despotism, and whose greatness,* built upon the common faith of their citizens, may be read in the imperishable monuments they have left us. Who, for example, can visit the "City of the Virgin" and fail to read the lesson which is written alike on her palaces and her pictures, her public buildings and her churches? "Siena," remarks Mr. Hemans, kindled by his subject into unwonted enthusiasm, "Siena seems an abstract of the Italian Middle Ages, here scarcely breathed upon by the spirit of modern times. Eloquent proofs of the domination of religion in the past, its elevating presence and all-pervading power, here meet us on every side. The whole architecture and general physiognomy of this picturesque city form a noble evidence to the civilizing influences of the Church, in her association with institutions that assured municipal prosperity as well as rational freedom."†

The history and character of those institutions is ever becoming better known, and they all tell the same tale. The Communal movement

* Montalembert has truly observed: "Dans la vie publique, comme dans la vie privée, . . . ce qui éclate surtout, c'est la force et la grandeur d'âme: ce qui abonde, ce sont les grand caractères, les grands individus. C'est là, qu'on le sache bien, la vraie, l'incontestable supériorité du Moyen Age. C'était un époque feconde en hommes. 'Magna parens virum.'"—*Les Moines d'Occident*, Int. cclvi.

† *Med. Christianity and Sacred Art*, p. 450.

which shattered feudal tyranny, and initiated in Europe municipal self-government, is, to a very great extent, traceable to the direct intervention of prelates and monks. Those sturdy burghers who rebuilt the walls and revived the civilization of the old free cities, and who, Auguste Thierry judges, "went far beyond us in the pursuit of public liberties," * ever worked under the invocation of their patron saint, and consecrated their chief corporate acts by sacrifice and prayer. The ordinances of the corporations and gilds, by which "the principle of association" was in use as "a living practice of the common folk" † of the Middle Ages, still remain, and are now accessible to us; and among their "most pleasing traits" their accomplished editor notes "the evidences of a simple piety and a faith that entered into everyday life." ‡ It was that faith, in the undoubting unity of which men lived, worked, and died, that rendered such associations possible; upon that faith they were directly founded. And—what is more remarkable still—the first place in their statutes and ordinances was given to

* "Nous avons été précédés de loin, dans la recherche des libertés publiques, par ces bourgeois du moyen-âge, qui relevèrent il y a six cent ans, les murs et la civilisation des antiques cités municipales."—*Lettres sur l'Histoire de France*, p. 6, 5th edition.

† *The Original Ordinances of more than one hundred English Gilds, &c.* Early English Text Society, Int., p. xiii.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. xxix.

that supernatural end, the recognition of which by traders appears to a brilliant writer of this century so grotesque, that he thought the bare suggestion of it a sufficient *reductio ad absurdum*. "If," Lord Macaulay observes, "the doctrine that every association of human beings which exercises any power whatever is bound, as such association, to profess a religion, ... every stage-coach company ought, in its collective capacity, to profess a religion. Railway directors must offer prayer and praise in their collective capacity. Joint-stock banks and clubs, having a personality, lie under the necessity of sanctifying that personality by the offices of religion." * Of course I am not concerned with the value of the particular arguments which Lord Macaulay is here combating. I merely wish to point to the fact that what he, and the world in general in this nineteenth century, deem so palpably absurd, was the universal rule of the Middle Ages. "In the accounts of the origin of the Company of Grocers," writes Dr. Brentano, "it is mentioned that at their very first meeting, they fixed the stipend for the priest, who had to conduct their religious services, and to pray for their dead. In this respect," he adds, "the craft gilds of all countries are alike, and in reading their statutes one might fancy sometimes that the old

* "Essay on Gladstone's *Church and State*." *Works*, vol. vi. p. 334.

craftsmen cared only for the well-being of their souls." *

It would be beyond the scope of the present Chapter to follow out into the various paths of medieval life the traces of this "elevating presence and all-pervading power;" to mark how, as Mr. Ruskin has finely said, † "Medieval art is but the expression of the joy of those who have found the young child with Mary his mother;" ‡ how the literature of the Middle Ages in spite of the grossness and licentiousness, which often disfigure it, is informed by great Christian verities; how the poetry of common life so rich and abundant in that epoch, springs from the same source, and "the birds, the plants, everything that man meets on his way through the world are marked by his faith and his hope;" § nay more, how the churches serve as theatres, and those very amusements || which we now deem most distinctively secular, are made religious. There is, however, one consideration of great importance closely connected with the point I have last dwelt upon,—the construc-

* *English Gilds*, Int., p. cxxxiii.

† In an unpublished lecture, quoted at page 487 of Miss Owen's *Art Schools of Medieval Christendom*.

‡ So Alfred de Musset, in his graceful way:—"autrefois, le temple des arts était le temple de Dieu même. . . . Ces tableaux, ces chapelles, ces mélodies suaves et plaintives c'étaient des prières que tout cela."—*Mélanges*, p. 4.

§ Montalembert, *Vie de Ste. Elisabeth*, Int., p. 154.

|| For some very just remarks on the miracle plays see Miss Toulmin Smith's *York Mystery Plays*, Int., p. lv.

tive character of medieval religion—upon which a few words should be said. It is this, that a main characteristic impressed upon the Middle Ages by Catholic unity, is the spirit of the family.

Christian men, as we have seen, were regarded as "domestici Dei"; the various states were sections of the one household of faith, Christendom; and governments, whether regal or republican, stood "in loco parentis." The king was the father of his people; senates were, according to the old Roman phrase, "patres conscripti"; the duty of obedience to civil authority was deduced directly from the precept of the Decalogue: "Honour thy father and thy mother." Thus it is observed by the most eloquent of Anglican divines, whose mind was saturated with the teaching of the great masters of the medieval schools: "This duty to parents is the very firmament and bond of commonwealths. He that honours his parents will also love his brethren, derived from the same loins; he will dearly account of all his relatives and persons of the same cognation; and so families are united, and of them, cities and societies are formed. And because parents and patriarchs of families and of nations had regal power, they who by any change succeeded in the care and government of cities and kingdoms, succeeded in the power and authority of fathers, and became so in estimate of law and true divinity to their people."* And this principle

* *Life of Christ*, part. ii. dis. 9.

runs throughout medieval society. Gilds, for example, were nothing but families artificially enlarged. "The family appears as the first gild," remarks Dr. Brentano; "or, at least, as an archetype of the gilds. Originally, its providing care satisfies all existing wants; and for other societies there is, therefore, no room. As soon, however, as wants arise, which the family can no longer satisfy . . . . closer artificial alliances immediately spring forth to provide for them, in so far as the state does not do it. Yet . . . . whatever and however diverse be their aims, the gilds take over from the family the spirit which held it together and guided it; they are its faithful image, though only for special and definite objects." *

And here I would point out that the secular organisation of medieval Europe on this basis of the family was the direct consequence of its religious organisation in the Catholic Church. It is the teaching of theology, remarks a learned French prelate, that "the human race was originally intended to develop without loss of its unity. If the original fall had not turned aside the primal plan of Providence, slavery, war, barbarism, all that breaks the unity of humanity, would not have desolated the world. It would be hazardous to attempt to guess the form of organisation which that development would have taken. But we may,

* *English Gilds*, Int., p. lxxx.

at all events, conclude that its two constituent principles—principles which are necessarily included in the ideas of human society and unity—would have been the authority of the Father of the Family and a supreme central authority, and that between these two degrees, social hierarchs would have been established. This idea has been realized in the Catholic Church, so far as the spiritual reconstruction of the human race is concerned. The Bishops, in whom the sacerdotal character is complete, and who alone have the power of transmitting it, are the fathers of the spiritual families, centres of unity, but they kept in unity by their connection with and subordination to the central paternity, the Head of the Church and Father of Fathers." * Thus, according to Mgr. Gerbet, whose words I abstract rather than translate, the constitution of the Catholic Church implies the restoration of the human race to that unity which sin and its consequences have broken. The secular organisation of Christendom, as contemplated by the Popes, was the complement of this idea. The revived Roman Empire was manifestly intended by them to be in things temporal what the Church was in things spiritual. The Emperor was to be the antitype of the Supreme Pontiff; his subordinate authorities were to correspond to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It was felt—to use Dr. Arnold's well-

* *Rome Chrétienne*, chap. vii.

known words—that "a society of Christians should be a Christian society": that the heavenly and the earthly commonwealths should sustain each other, that the sword of the spirit should defend civil society, that the temporal sword—the bearer of it being also God's minister—should be used for "the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of true religion and virtue." * The Holy Roman Empire was, no doubt, but a splendid failure,

> "not answering the aim,
> And that unbodied figure of the thought
> That gav't surmiséd shape."

But that thought, although unexecuted in its fulness, was still at the root of the organisation of medieval society. The association of men for the various needs of civilized life was held to have something divine in it. The State was built upon fatherhood; it was a hierarchy of families; its head being the representative of Him of whom "all paternity in heaven and earth is named." Hence the supreme

* Thus St. Gregory VII., writing to Rodolph Duke of Suabia, in 1073, observes: "The sovereign reigns most gloriously and the vigour of Holy Church is established, when priesthood and empire are joined in the unity of concord. There should be nothing feigned, nothing impure, in that concord. . . . . As the human body is directed, in the natural light, by two eyes, so when these two dignities are united in the harmony of pure religion, the body of the Church manifestly appears ruled and illuminated by spiritual light."—*Registrum*, book i. Ep. 19.

place given to the feeling of loyalty—a feeling very different in the Middle Ages from that "rational attachment to the guardian of the laws" which Junius defines it to be.* The loyalty of the Middle Ages was no matter of cold calculation; it was the spontaneous, ungrudging devotion of a child to a parent. Hence, too, the extreme blackness of the crime of treason to which, as King Alfred explains, "no mercy was assigned, because Almighty God adjudged none to them that despised Him, nor did Christ adjudge any to them which sold Him to death; and he commanded that a lord should be loved like Himself." †

Here, it should be noted, is the explanation of the "intolerance" of the Middle Ages. If the true constitution of medieval society is once really apprehended, its legislation against heresy is intelligible enough. To generations which regarded religion as the prime objective fact of life—the bond of the social and political order—heresy must have presented itself in a very different aspect from that which it wears to an age of religious individualism. The Middle Ages were beyond all things dogmatic. To the men of those times, doubt as to the clearness and sufficiency of the doctrine preached by the Catholic Church seemed mere blasphemy.

* Letter I., "Loyalty in the heart and understanding of an Englishman is a rational attachment to the guardian of the laws."

† Quoted in Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 399.

That every man has a natural right to form by his own judgment, and independent of all authority, the opinions upon which his intellectual, moral, and social life depends, is, with a large class of persons at the present day, a first principle; and in surveying the mediæval period, it more or less biases their judgment. Balmez * complains of the bad faith with which the question of toleration has been approached. I doubt, however, whether, in the great majority of cases, deliberate dishonesty can be imputed to the writers of whose unfairness he justly complains. Their fault rather arises from their forgetting the immense difference between the social, political, and religious condition of that age of the world and of this, whence they are led to "people past history with phantasms and colour it with lines which belong to our own days."

If we once fairly grasp the truth that to the men of medieval times the will of God, as they conceived of it, was the fount of all right and all duty—the source from which all human laws derive their obligation—we shall be in little danger of falling into this error. In the Ten Commandments is the key to the penal legislation of the Middle Ages. The conception of crime current then was very different from the conception now commonly entertained. The offences which the civil magistrate was called upon to punish were infractions of the divine law,

* *Europ. Civil.*, c. xxxiv.

and were penal rather as breaches of duty than as violations of rights. In administering justice he was considered to be acting as "an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," * punishment being chiefly regarded as the divinely appointed sequence of crime, its first end the vindication of the Divine honour. And the supreme evil which a man could do was held to be the denial of the faith which God had revealed, for it appeared to combine all the worst elements of wickedness. "It was treason against the Sovereign Lord; it was a capital injury to the commonwealth, whose prosperity depended upon His favour. "Dis te minorem quod geris imperas" being the most axiomatic principle of statecraft; it was the most grievous of wrongs to one's neighbour, for heresy was as a canker eating away the body politic; it was worse than murder, in the degree that the soul which it slew is more excellent than the body." †

* The conception now generally prevalent is very far removed from this. "The object of human punishment," writes Blackstone, "is not by way of atonement or expiation for the crime committed, for that must be left to the Supreme Being; but as a precaution against future offences of the same kind."—Stephen's *Commentaries*, vol. iv. p. 13. "Crimes," according to the same authority, "are the violations of rights" ("rights" being "liberties secured to the individual by the compact of civil society"), when considered in a "particular point of view, viz., in reference to the evil effects of such violation on the community at large."—*Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 201.

† *A Century of Revolution*, p. 29.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

The lawgivers of the Middle Ages prescribed for this offence the highest penalty they knew of; and their penal code was severe, nay, savage. They thought lightly of inflicting and of undergoing physical suffering. To which we should add, that real, earnest belief, even if it be a belief that nothing ought to be believed, is impatient of contradiction. The Communists of our own day, assassinating "les serviteurs d'un nommé Dieu;" the earlier champions of liberty, equality, fraternity, massacring the priests, and hurrying the laity by thousands to the scaffold or the river, may serve as illustrations of this fact. The toleration fashionable in this age is largely the outcome of indifference.

This then is the distinguishing note of the Middle Ages, that they were before and beyond all things the Ages of Faith. But as in the individual so in the mass, faith is only one of the theological virtues; it may exist, nay in practice it often does exist, without the others. The undoubted fact, that the men of medieval times breathed an atmosphere of belief, is quite consistent with the equally indubitable fact that they perpetrated an enormous amount of wickedness. The great verities of Christianity were everywhere externally honoured, and were interiorly received with unquestioning submission by the masses. All men recognised and confessed them;

many turned aside from the confession to sin grossly and habitually in the teeth of them. Men's abuse of religious truth was rendered more flagrant by the very firmness with which they held it. The sins and scandals of the Middle Ages were on the same scale with their virtues. The age of Innocent III. was also the age of King John. St. Anthony of Padua and Eccelino were contemporaries. The firmest faith and the grossest corruption of life met together; nay, more, were found united in the same person, giving birth to that rank superstition which is so marked a feature of the medieval period. "Great men would not go out to hunt without hearing Mass, but were content that the priest should mutilate it, and worse, to bring it within limits. . . . . Tournaments," breathing the spirit of the ancient gladiatorial shows, "were held in defiance of the excommunications of the Church, yet were conducted with a show of devotion; ordeals, again, were even religious rites, yet in like manner undergone in the face of the Church's prohibition. . . . . The Troubadour offered tapers and paid for masses, for his success in some lawless attachment; and the object of it in return painted her votary under the figure of a saint. . . . . The Crusaders had faith sufficient to bind them to a perilous pilgrimage and warfare; they kept the Friday's abstinence, and planted the tents of their mistresses within the shadow of the pavilion of the

glorious St. Louis." * It would be easy to fill volumes with sketches of still darker aspects of medieval life. But I need not enlarge upon that topic. My object in this Chapter has been not to present an "abstract and brief chronicle" of the Middle Ages, but to exhibit the ideal which dominated them: an ideal essential to be kept in view in order to their philosophic study: the ideal expressed by the word Christendom.

* Cardinal Newman's *Anglican Difficulties*, p. 245.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RENAISSANCE.

It is a fine saying of De Maistre: "Dieu n'efface que pour écrire." We might, however, say with equal warrant, Dieu n'écrit que pour effacer. All our institutions are of the earth, earthy; and, sooner or later, are turned again to their dust. This is so even with the intellectual representations—Vorstellungen—in which we embody for our use in time—our own time—truths that are eternal. They are subject to decline, decay, and dissolution. "They have their day and cease to be." In the region of thought, as of action, it holds good that here we have no continuing city. As the thirteenth century draws to a close the mediæval order begins to show signs of exhaustion. Its decline may be dated from the beginning of the fourteenth century. Then is first manifest the enfeeblement of the ancient Catholic unity. Thence we may trace the gradual decadence of the social structure based on that unity, until in the middle of the succeeding century the world definitely

enters upon a new era. Even in the fourteenth century itself we find more of the coming than of the closing age. It is not at first that new ideas are distinctly before men's minds: that fresh aims and objects definitely shape themselves. Neither in the sphere of religion nor of morals, of physical science nor of industry, is there any movement which may properly be called revolutionary. It is rather that the old doctrines and principles on which preceding centuries had lived, which shaped their legislation, animated their art, informed their literature, governed their social life, seem to have lost vivifying influence. And so ever more and more, until the medieval period closes, society ceases to seek its guide in the Church, and the Church ceases to see itself reflected in society.

We find, as we might expect, striking evidence of this change in the altered condition of the institution around which Christendom was centered. The growth of the new nationalities was unfavourable to the old conception of a Christian republic. And as they gradually develop fuller life, and their rulers become greater potentates, so does the position of the Papacy decline in the European order. Philip the Fair succeeds where monarchs of far more account than he, had, in bygone times, ignominiously failed. It is true that Boniface VIII. was not of the intellectual or spiritual stature of Gregory VII., of Alexander III.,

of Innocent III. But it is also true that the conditions of the combat were changed. The earlier Pontiffs had behind them the *communis sensus*, the public opinion of Christendom. That was lacking to Boniface VIII., partly, no doubt, from his own fault, but partly, and still more, from no fault of his own. With him the decadence of the Papacy begins. It is immensely accelerated by the enforced departure of the Pontiffs from the Papal city. The divisions of Italy, the turbulence of the Roman factions, had rendered their residence there almost impossible. It had become for them a veritable house of bondage. And in 1308 —six years after the death of Boniface—Clement V. transfers the Papal Court to Avignon. In him, writes Mill, who had made of this period a special study, "for the first time, the Church sank into the abject tool of secular tyranny; with him commenced the new era of the Papacy which made it the horror and disgust of the rapidly improving European mind, until . . . . the period which we commonly call the Middle Age" * closes.

No one who knows the facts can assert that this vehement language is unwarranted. It is not easy too strongly to reprobate the part played by Clement V. in the suppression of the Templars. Doubtless the order had lost its reason for existence since the capture of the last Christian fortress in

* *Discus. and Dissert.*, vol. ii. p. 162.

Syria. Weighty consideration might have been urged for its abolition. Nothing can be urged in defence of the means whereby it was abolished.* And it cannot be questioned that Clement's share in this great wickedness seriously impaired the moral influence of the Papacy throughout Europe. The six Popes who immediately followed him resided at Avignon. And whatever may be said of the good qualities displayed by some of them—by Gregory XI., for example—certain it is that their abject dependence upon the French monarch gravely undermined their œcumenical authority, and alienated from the Apostolic See much of the unquestioning reverence with which men had once regarded it. The *Defensio Pacis*—1328 is its date—in which the Paduan physician Marsilio openly challenged the claims of the Papacy, is a most significant sign of the times. To quote the well-weighed words of Ranke, "There was a common opposition to the principles of the Pontifical jurisprudence. . . . . We see one nation after another realise its independence and unity. The civil power will no longer acknowledge any higher authority. The Popes no longer find allies in the middle classes. Their interferences are resolutely repelled by princes and legislative bodies." †

* M. Renan in his interesting article, "La Papauté hors de l'Italie" (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, March, 1880), expresses a somewhat more favourable view of Clement V. than is usually taken.

† *Die romischen Päpste*, book i. c. 1.

In 1376 Gregory XI. returned to Rome, and the Babylonish Captivity came to an end. It is succeeded by the Great Schism, which, as Döllinger has truly pointed out, had its origin in purely national interests: and the effect of which was to shake the authority of the Papacy to its foundations, to convulse the Church for more than forty years, and almost to obliterate, for the time, her essential notes of unity and universality. That too came to an end by the election of Martin V. in 1417, at the Council of Constance. In this learned and pious Pontiff we are bidden to behold "the second founder of the Papal monarchy and the restorer of Rome." It is perfectly true that the Papacy now put on some semblance of its former greatness. Professions of high reverence and of universal obedience were once more made to the Pontiff. But it is equally true that he might have justly applied to himself the words of the sacred writer: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me." No doubt one of the causes which largely alienated the European mind from the Papal See is to be found in the monstrous abuses of the *Curia Romana*. There were not wanting, even among the Avignonese Popes, those who would gladly have set their house in order. But no Hercules able to cleanse so foul an Augean stable was found among them. Even Martin V. was insufficient for the task. "Christendom,"

Dr. Pastor writes, "might have abandoned itself to unqualified joy at his election, if he had taken the question of Church Reform vigorously in hand —a question entangled, indeed, in the greatest difficulties." The real obstacles, the learned author intimates, were what he euphemistically calls "the tenacious resistance offered by interests once established"—the vested interests, that is, of the *Curia Romana*—and the needs of the Papal exchequer. And he adds, "It was an unspeakable calamity that ecclesiastical affairs still essentially retained the secular aspect which they had assumed in the dreadful time of the Schism, and that the much-needed reform was again deferred." * Deferred it was, however, both by this Pope and his successors. However strong their conviction of the need of reformation when they ascended the Papal throne, it failed to find practical expression after they were once firmly seated there. Even in Nicholas V., "the reforming zeal which had animated him in the beginning of his reign, quickly, and ever more and more, became inoperative. The blame falls less upon this learned and morally unimpeachable Pope, than upon the Italians surrounding him, who thought their incomes depended entirely upon abuses, and who, accordingly, hung like a leaden weight upon every attempt at reform." †

* *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, book ii. § 1, p. 164

† *Ibid.*, book iii. § 2, p. 304.

As it was in the head, so also was it in the members. Fleury says of the religious orders in the fourteenth century—and the words are as applicable to the fifteenth—"Cette sainte institution était alors en sa plus grande décadence." Even of the two of them most recently founded this is true. That love of "holy poverty" which had inflamed St. Francis of Assisi and his immediate disciples, had degenerated into professional mendicancy or "able beggary," as Wicklif not unwarrantedly called it: and the whole Franciscan body was a prey to anarchy, partly political, partly theological. The Dominicans, on the other hand, seemed to have passed from an Order of Preachers into an Order of Inquisitors: and the ruthless severity with which they executed their terrible office can hardly have failed to shock the public conscience. How could it have been otherwise, when a debtor was condemned for paying money to a creditor suspected of heresy, when a sister was condemned for giving food to a starving brother, when a girl of fifteen was condemned for not denouncing heretical parents? Of the condition of the secular clergy it is difficult to speak in general terms. Doubtless there were among them a great multitude of holy and humble men of heart like the "poor parson of a town" whom Chaucer has so winningly depicted for us. Still, there is a vast amount of evidence that at particular times, and in particular places, they too were infected by the

general degeneracy as the Middle Ages ran to an end.

The dissolution of the old order was fast proceeding in the intellectual domain also. The great work of the medieval mind had been to elaborate the vast structure of the scholastic philosophy. The limitations of that philosophy had been imposed upon it by the actual conditions of thought. Classical literature was, to a great extent, lost or buried. Physical science was "an infant crying in the night." Criticism was not even born. The only philosophy which the schoolmen knew was Aristotle's, as filtered through the Arabian intellect. It came to them as a sort of revelation. Their special work was to use it for systematizing theology. By its aid they embodied, in Sums or Compendiums, reasoned expositions of the Christian doctrines. Nor, as Archbishop Trench happily expresses it, "did these spiritual freemasons leave off till there had risen up under their hands structures as marvellous in an architectonic completeness of their own, as the magnificent domes and cathedrals which, at the same time, were everywhere covering the face of Europe with novel forms of grace and beauty." * Carrying on the metaphor we may say that in the decadent architecture of the closing medieval period is figured the decadence of its philosophy. The Perpen-

* *Lectures on Medieval Church History*, p. 200.

dicular, or as we find it in France the Flamboyant style, in its cold rigidity, is a true image of the dry and barren disquisitions of the later schoolmen.

But, further, the medieval Church had been the one and the universal instrument of culture. Not only religious dogma, but philosophy, physics, art, education, had depended upon her alone. She had been the all-sufficient guide of life. As the fourteenth century wore on, men began to question whether her guidance was sufficient. And soon they decided that it was not. A lay movement manifests itself in society. Commercial and secular interests assume new importance. There are everywhere tokens that the intellectual domain is ceasing to be a province of the ecclesiastical. "Profane" knowledge gradually conquers an ample territory of its own. A quickened, a renascent * interest in the thought and lore of the antique world manifests itself and grows rapidly. It is curious—and significant of the contrary currents of thought which traverse the epoch—that the rise of the modern tongues of Europe into completer symmetry and

* In Italy the study of the Latin classics had always been kept up to a much larger extent than used to be commonly supposed. Much interesting information on this subject is given by Giesebrecht in his *De Litterarum studiis apud Italos primis medii œvi seculis.* But Giesebrecht, who wrote nearly half a century ago, undervalued the teaching of the ecclesiastical schools.

ampler form, is coincident with this new-born devotion to the classical world. In the fourteenth century the *langue d'oïl* definitely gives way to modern French, of which the first great monument is Froissart's *Chronicles*; our English tongue assumes the shape in which Chaucer used it for his *Canterbury Tales*; and Dante "fixed for thousands of years and myriads of men a language far richer and more beautiful than . . . . Italy ever knew before, in any of her regions, since the Attic and the Doric contended for the prize of eloquence on her southern shores." *

It is in Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio, we are often told, that we must recognise the precursors of the fifteenth-century *Aufklärung*. No doubt this is so. Dante, however, belongs much more to the old order than to the new. Notwithstanding his quarrel with the Papacy, he was ever the devoted and unquestioning son of the Church. Coleridge has truly said "his imagination was as medieval as his theology and philosophy." He was before and beyond all things dogmatic. Petrarch's mind was cast in another mould. It was saturated with the poets and philosophers of antiquity, and disdainful of the scholastic teaching. His celebrated remark, "After all Aristotle was a man, and did not know everything," has been characterised as "memorable indeed: the most daring saying, perhaps, heard in

* Landor: Pentameron, *Works*, vol. iii. p. 485.

the Middle Ages." * Boccacio dallied even more than Petrarch with the antique divinities. Dr. Pastor speaks, not unjustly, of his writings as "breathing an atmosphere of heathen corruption." Ecclesiastics, monks, and nuns are the chosen objects of his ridicule; and he does not hesitate to barb the shafts of his sarcasm with the most sacred names and allusions. Dr. Pastor no doubt is right in holding that "Boccacio was no unbeliever"; there is not in the Decameron one word which is decidedly hostile to the Christian faith; and Landor was wrong in judging that he dissimulated heterodox opinions, as "hardly worth the ceremony of being burnt alive for, although it should be at the expense of the Church." Still his story of the *Three Kings' Rings* significantly indicates the absence of the dogmatism which was so strong in Dante. But it is in the domain of art that we most clearly trace the workings of the new spirit: the breaking away, more and more, from the conventional mediæval manner, the ever closer and freer study of nature, the application, with constantly advancing success, of the laws of perspective and of anatomical science, and of the various methods of painting in oil and tempera, the enthusiasm for antiquity which inspires each successive generation in ampler measure. The works of the Quattrocentisti—of Paolo Uccelli, of Filippo Lippi, of Sandro Boti-

* See Mézière's *Pétrarque*, p. 302.

celli, of Domenico Ghirlandaio, of Luca Signorelli —are the outward visible signs of a great change unconsciously wrought in man himself. Europe had ceased to be ecclesiastical and had become secular. An intellectual unity was taking the place of the old spiritual unity. It is not too much to say that when in 1453 Constantinople fell, Christendom had really ceased to exist. "Pope and Emperor," wrote Æneas Silvius the year after the event, "are nothing but fictitious names and splendid figure heads." * Europe had entered upon the new phase of existence which we call the Renaissance.

It is the custom † to date this new phase from the memorable year that witnessed the event of which I have just spoken: an event surely of great importance in the European order: for it was "the destruction of that bulwark which had stood for twelve centuries" in defence of "the faith and civilization of Christendom," ‡ while "it brought to Italy the literary wealth of Greece." §

* *Epis.* l. i. 127.

† The custom is recognised by Littré. The Renaissance epoch, he tells us in his Dictionary, "began at the taking of Constantinople in 1453, which caused the emigration of many learned Greeks to Italy."

‡ Bp. Creighton's *History of the Papacy during the Reformation*, vol. ii. p 344.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

No doubt the chronology of ideas is, and must necessarily be, to a great extent, arbitrary and inexact. We must say the same of the formulas in which we try to express them. Who, for example, can define the word Renaissance? I remember hearing a very gifted person speak of "the avatars, the endless metempsychoses" of the movement we call by that name. He was well warranted in so speaking, for it presents itself to us in a vast variety of form, and in a constant succession of transformations. It was an innovating movement, certainly. It served the cause of the Protestant Reformation—as I shall have to note in the next Chapter—by its onslaughts on superstition, its freedoms with authority, its translations of the Sacred Scriptures. It was as certainly a Conservative movement. One of its brightest sons—Sir Thomas More—died a martyr to the doctrine of the Papal Supremacy: and the Church in a sense adopted it and used it as a weapon against her foes. It was at once gay and grave, frivolous and studious, sensuous and intellectual, cynical and earnest. Consider its various types as represented by Aretino, Erasmus, Pomponazzi, Cornelius Agrippa, Leo X., Cervantes, Giordano Bruno, Michel Angelo, Rabelais, Montaigne. All assuredly were its children. But how difficult to trace in them a family likeness. What was its genius, its dominant idea, its Zeitgeist?

Before we answer that question regarding a move-

ment so far-reaching, so complex, so many-sided, we shall do well to remember what a vast number of actions, in the life of every individual, are the outcome of obscure and indefinable agencies, which seem to lie close to the very source of life and to form part and parcel of our personality. It is just the same in the life of collective humanity, in the history of nations. It happens often—I by no means say always—that we cannot trace events to this or that principle, or sentiment, or aspiration, that we cannot exhibit the working or estimate the share of the complicated currents of thought and springs of action which we know to underlie them. But if we wish to characterize the Renaissance in a single phrase, I do not know of a happier one than Mill's: "that great breaking loose of the human faculties."* How momentous were the consequences of that "breaking loose" in every province of intellectual activity, I need not say. It is not my purpose to follow, even in outline, so vast a subject. My object is to indicate the relation of the Renaissance to those Claims of Christianity which are the special theme of this volume. Of course I must

* *Dissert. and Discus.*, vol. i. p. 57. "Breaking loose" does not necessarily imply freedom, as Goethe's dictum, "Freiheit ist keine Lösung" may serve to remind us. In my *Chapters in European History* (chap. iv.) I have examined at some length the account very often given of the Renaissance as a new birth unto liberty.

speak in general terms. But I shall be as precise as the subject and my limits allow. And I shall be satisfied if I can indicate lines of thought and inquiry which my readers may follow out at their own leisure and in their own way.

Dr. Pastor, in his important work from which I have already quoted, makes an attempt to distinguish between the Christian and the Pagan Renaissance. With all respect for this learned and conscientious writer, I must take leave to say that the attempt does not seem to me specially successful. No doubt the true idea of the Renaissance would have been to have pressed the rediscovered wisdom of the ancient world into the service of men's highest interests and loftiest aspirations, to have made it minister to the spiritual development of humanity, individually and socially. "All men by nature desire knowledge," says Aristotle in the well-known sentence which opens his Metaphysics. To have made that desire subserve the mission of Christianity, as the new era opened, would have been a vast step in the progress of our race. The old bottles of Scholasticism could not contain the new fermenting wine. In Plato there lay hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge neglected, or rather unknown, since the brief days of the Alexandrian School, with its broad and bold doctrine of the Logos. If those treasures could have been made available for the needs of the time, if the intellect of Europe could have been informed by

the teachings of the most religious mind of antiquity, the gain would have been incalculable. Again, if the age could have learnt what —

> "The lofty grave tragedians taught
> In chorus or iambic, teacher's best
> Of moral prudence with delight receive
> In brief sententious precept ——"

the "sensuous tumult," which so eminently characterized the age, might have been largely hushed. The work of the masters of the tragic stage had been to bring out into relief the deep truths which lived in the old national legends of Hellas: to reset them in the forms furnished by creative genius; "to exhibit the sorrows and sadnesses of the world as part of a vast scheme of purificatory chastisement;" to present the sterner aspects of man's existence transfigured and idealised, so that he might "above himself erect himself." Make abstraction of death, and what is human life but a comedy in which vices of temperament and illusions of self-love play the principal parts; a tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing? But add the thought of death, and the poor play is transformed. It becomes a tragedy. "La fin est toujours sanglante." In the final catastrophe lies the key to the whole fable. This is what the great tragedians of Greece knew. In the discordant concert of every-day life they struck that deep and sinister note, to purge the emotions by terror and pity.

But these things were alien from the Renaissance mind. It was not to the Greek tragedians, nor to Plato, that its Italian representatives turned for intellectual and spiritual nutriment; or, if they did so turn, Ficino and the Florentine Academy may suffice to show their ill success. No doubt among its children of the *Deutsche Stamm*, a more serious and elevated tone of thought prevailed, as Cusa, Brandt and Trithemius, Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, may serve to show. But I find nowhere any in whom we may discern an adequate idea of a Christian Renaissance. Certainly we do not see it in Pope Nicholas V., of whom Dr. Pastor truly tells us—"he put himself at the head of the artistic and literary Renaissance: it is in this that the real importance of his Pontificate consists"* "All that Nicholas undertook," writes Gregorovius, "was directed towards the exaltation of the Holy See: the one object of his ambition was to increase its dignity and authority, by the visible splendour of its monuments, and the intellectual influence it would exert, in becoming the centre of the learning of the world." † And Dr. Pastor's account is substantially the same. "Rome, the centre of the Church—this was Nicholas V.'s great plan—should be elevated to a centre of literature and art, to a great monumental city, with the finest library in the

* *Geschichte der Päpste*, &c., book iii. § 5, p. 383.

† *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter*, book vii. p. 137.

world, while at the same time it should be transformed into a firm, secure seat for the Papacy." * None of the Renaissance Popes soared beyond this conception. Most of them sank very far below it. The truth is that the Renaissance, whatever else it may have been, was eminently a secularizing movement. And it secularized the Papacy, as it secularized everything else.

It is this aspect of the Renaissance which is indicated by the word Humanism, in the sense it now usually bears. Formerly our English word "humanist," like the French "humaniste," and the Italian "umanísta," denoted a student or teacher of the *literæ humaniores* or "humanity," a term still employed in the Scotch Universities. But Humanism, in its now generally accepted signification, means something very different from that. It denotes a creed, a philosophy, a rule of life. And I do not know who has given a fuller account of it than the late Mr. Symonds. It was the congenial task of that diligent and accomplished writer, for the best years of his life, to set forth the sources of this doctrine, to narrate the labours of its apostles and evangelists, to glorify "the humanistic impulse" † and to recommend "the revelations of Humanism to the modern world." ‡ "The essence of Humanism," according

* *Geschichte der Päpste*, &c., book iii. § 5, p. 385.

† *Revival of Learning*, p. 72. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

to Mr. Symonds, "consisted in a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determinations, and in the further perception that classical literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of moral and intellectual freedom" * Now this has a very grand sound. It is ἱερὸν, καὶ σεμνὸν, καὶ τερατῶδες. But is it true? Let us look at it a little.

And first, as to "the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determination." Of course there are theologies and theologies: but taking the word in the largest and most proper sense, as the science of things divine, it is simple matter of historical fact, apart from all theories, that we owe to "theological determinations" all the ideas commonly prevailing among men as to the supersensual side of man's nature. Of that side physical science knows nothing. The physicist is occupied with phenomena and the material world. Philosophy, no doubt, has for its primary object the explanation of the supersensuous side of man's nature: γνῶθι σεαυτὸν indicates accurately its function. But theology is philosophy applied to religion. And, as a matter of fact, for the vast majority, who cannot lay hold of a system of abstract thought, theology supplies the place of metaphysics. Theology it is which has made current a very clear and distinct conception of "the dignity of man," a dignity which clings

* *Ibid.*, p. 71.

inseparably to the humblest and most ignorant, the most marred and degraded of our race, as being, in Goethe's phrase, "half god." But apart from its determinations, and taking man as the experience of life reveals him to our senses, what room is there for talking of his "dignity as a rational being"?

Here it is eminently necessary to clear one's mind of cant; to put altogether aside the abstraction which *doctrinaires* intend when they speak of "man." Contemplate, not this *individuum vagum*, but the ordinary Englishman, Frenchman, German, or Italian, the ordinary Hindoo, Tartar, or Yankee, as he lives, moves, and has his being upon the face of this planet, bibulous, esurient, concupiscent, mendacious, and consider whether apart from theological determinations, either "rationality" or "dignity" can be predicated of him. Or if we turn to the annals of any nation under heaven, what is the spectacle that meets us? A few choice specimens of wisdom and virtue light up, from age to age, the world's dreary *fasti*. Apart from them, is not the picture pretty much what Heine has described it: "Human stupidity, always the same; modified only by time or circumstance." "What does civil history acquaint us with," asked Warburton of another Right Rev. Prelate, "but the incorrigible rogueries of mankind, or ecclesiastical history more than their follies?" *

* *Correspondence with Hurd*, Let. cclx.

The question is perhaps too truculent. But this much is certain, that the mind of every profound historian, ancient or modern, has been turned to gloom, as he has unfolded the story which he has set himself to tell. A mere accomplished narrator—for example, a Macaulay—glides lightly over the surface of events, and presents us with a series of brilliant pictures. It is far otherwise with a Tacitus. A "sæva indignatio," not less deep, although more restrained, than that which consumed the soul of our own great satirist, informs his pages; and it is so, in greater or less measure, with all the more philosophic historians—with Thucydides, with Guicciardini, with Gibbon. Who can turn away from them and talk, except in the bitterest irony, of "the dignity of man as a rational being"? And do those sublime Italian Humanists whose achievements adorn the page of Mr. Symonds, exhibit a higher type of humanity? Consider a Lorenzo de' Medici, conventionally "magnificent," but, judged by the ordinary canons of morality, a debauchee of the worst kind, an unprincipled swindler, and an unscrupulous tyrant: or take a Valla, "vir clarissimus" on the title-page of his works, but, according to "a terrible array of evidence," * a liar, a forger, a coward, and a filthy liver of the most odious description; or—not to prolong unduly the vile catalogue—survey the

* Symonds' *Revival of Learning*, p. 242, note.

great Filelfo himself, the most famous Humanist of the day, and a fair representative of all the tribe.* Contemplate him as Mr. Symonds has depicted him, "restrained by no scruples of religion and morality," "vulgar in style," "mean," "impudent," "ostentatious in tastes," "unclean in his indulgence," "disgusting in his rapacity," "impassioned in his hatred," of "unparalleled foulness in his recrimination." Such were the men to whom we are asked to believe there was revealed "a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being, apart from theological determinations."

Then, as to that further perception which Mr. Symonds considers to be of the essence of Humanism, namely, that up to the date of this movement "classic literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of moral and intellectual freedom," a few words must be said, and a very few will suffice. The question at once arises, What do you mean by "freedom"?† The con-

* "The typical Humanist of his age," according to Mr. Symonds' *Revival of Learning*, chap. v. p. 288. This chapter contains a very full and instructive account of him.

† It is a question which we have constantly to ask. Freedom is a word commonly used in the loosest way and serving generally to confound thought. Its meaning should never be taken on trust. There are really three kinds of freedom: (1) freedom of the will, in the metaphysical and traditional sense; (2) exterior freedom, juridical and political; (3) freedom in the moral and Stoic sense of liberation from the tyranny of passion.

ception of man in a state of absolute liberty is as fantastic as the notion of a bird without feathers, or as Herr Teufelsdröckh's wild imagination of a naked Duke of Windlestraw addressing a naked House of Lords. I take it that the distinction of a rational being, whereby he is altogether differentiated from irrational nature, is, in Kant's admirable phrase, "the faculty of acting according to the consciousness of laws:" that free action means action from a rational not an animal motive. If this be a true account of freedom, it is clear that we do not find it in its plenitude in classic literature, whether in the moral or intellectual province: not in its plenitude; scarcely in its germ. Unspeakably valuable as much is which that literature yields us, it does not yield us this. And, in truth, it was not in quest of this that the masters of the "new wisdom" of the fifteenth century resorted to classic literature. It was quite another sort of freedom that they sought there, and found; a freedom not intellectual, but sensual; not moral, but immoral.

There is a certain class of feelings and emotions by which man (I speak of no abstraction, but of man as actual life presents him) is specially distinguished from animate beings deemed lower in the scale of existence. Those feelings and emotions may be indicated with sufficient accuracy for the present purpose by the word "modesty"—"la plus belle des craintes après celle de Dieu,"

Chateaubriand has finely said, and of vital importance to the moral life of humanity. How obscured —nay, more, at certain periods how nearly effaced —this virtue was in the ancient classical world is sufficiently testified by its literature and its art, and recent excavations have afforded only too ample a confirmation of that testimony. To bring back and to develop the idea of purity among men was one of the most important parts of the work of Christianity in the world. Let any man compare Prudentius * with Horace in this respect, and it will seem as though, during the three centuries which intervene between the two poets, the world had gained a new moral sense; and so, in effect, it was. The conception idealised in St. Agnes or St. Eulalia would have been absolutely unintelligible to the ancients. It was precisely this defect in classic literature which was its great attraction to the Humanists of the fifteenth century. To undo the work of Christian spiritualism and to "rehabilitate the flesh"; to take up, and revive, and bring not merely into practice, but into credit, the most abominable vices of Paganism, was their self-imposed task. "Morality is an empty and imaginary thing:" "all pleasure is good," Valla taught.† Beccadelli applied himself in his *Hermaphroditus* to celebrating "the voluptuous grace of the ancients": and he acquitted himself with a

* The "Horace of the Christians," Bentley called him.

† See his *De Voluptate passim.*

shameless cynicism, a base animalism not easy to parallel. It was Filelfo's canon, that "what was good enough for Greeks and Romans was good enough for him"; * and it was this "perception," not any lofty theory of the "dignity of man as a rational being apart from theological determinations," that was the essence of the doctrine of the Italian Humanists. To the exposition and praise of foulness they devoted their best energies, and it may be truly said that they succeeded in surpassing their masters among the ancients.

This was "the intellectual and moral freedom" which they revealed to the world, and great was the company of the preachers of it. The practical results of the "new wisdom" shall be told, as far as they can be told, in Mr. Symonds' words. We read in his pages of the "enervation of society in worse than heathen vices." † He thinks "it almost impossible to overestimate the moral corruption of Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century." "Virtuous women," he asserts, "had no place there; but Phryne lived again in the person of Imperia, and dignitaries of the Church thought it no shame to parade their preference for Giton." ‡ "The imitation of the ancients in thought, sentiment, and language was no mere affectation. . . . . The standards of moral and æsthetic taste were

* *Revival of Learning*, p. 281.

† *Ibid.*, p. 407. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

paganised." * This "moral corruption" was accompanied by "political debility;" † and finally "the Humanists came to be dreaded as the corrupters of youth." ‡

It may be safely asserted then that, speaking generally, Italian Humanism was practically a rejection of the claim made by Christianity to supply the true standard and rule of human action. It was, on the whole, a movement away from Christian morality. It was a return, Rio has well observed, not so much to Classicalism, as to Paganism.§ Its leaders indeed paid to the existing religion a certain amount of outward homage, with whatever reservations of opinion, or derelictions of conduct. It by no means attacked, as did Protestantism, the unity and universality of the Church as a spiritual empire. On the contrary, its chiefs gladly entered into her service and were welcomed by her Pontiffs. Even Nicholas V., whose piety is not open to question, made Valla apostolic notary, and conferred valuable and responsible offices on Poggio and Filelfo. Nor does their position appear to have struck their contemporaries as anomalous. Of course the influence exercised by the Humanists at the Papal Court varied with the character and tastes of the

* *Ibid.*, p. 396.
† *Ibid.*, p. 407.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 515.
§ *De l'Art Chrétien*, vol. ii. p. 61.

Pontiffs. But, on the whole, it was considerable, and no doubt largely contributed to that increasing secularization * of the Papacy which marked the reigns of the nine Popes who successively followed Nicholas V. "In Alexander VI.," Bishop Creighton remarks, "the Papacy stood forth in all the strength of its emancipation from morality." † In Julius II., the founder of the Papal States, as they existed down to our own day, who indeed was himself no Humanist, the Vicar of Christ seems merged in the militant Italian prince unscrupulous in his greed of territory. Under Leo X. the Humanistic movement culminates, and perhaps Carlyle, who possessed a curious felicity in adjectives, was not far wrong in calling him the most Pagan of Popes. It is not too much to say that under such Pontiffs moral scepticism must have radiated from those who sat in the Apostolic Chair.

One of the most singular signs of these times is the curious mixture found everywhere of Pagan and Christian traditions. Thus in the bronze gates which Filarete made for St. Peter's, and which still adorn its main entrance, side by side with Christ and His Saints are represented Jupiter and Ganymede, Leda and the Swan, Hero

* Of course Adrian VI., during his short Pontificate, endeavoured to withstand this secularization. His complete insuccess is most significant.

† *History of the Papacy during the Reformation*, vol. v. p. 52.

and Leander. Dr. Pastor mentions choir books belonging to the Papal Chapel of Nicholas V. in which are to be seen most unseemly pictures.* Even in Boccacio we find an extraordinary confusion of heathen names and Christian sentiments. In the culminating period of the Renaissance, Cardinals are described as "Patres Conscripti": excommunication is "ignis et aquæ interdictio:" "Our Lady of Loretto" is turned into "the Goddess of Loretto"—dea Lauretana—and even Christ himself is transformed into Jupiter, as by Pulci: "O Sommo Giove per noi crocifisso." Erasmus, in one of his letters, tells us of his attending the Papal Chapel to hear a sermon delivered before Julius II., and a congregation, chiefly of distinguished ecclesiastics, on Good Friday. The preacher began with a panegyric on the Pope, whom he qualified as Jupiter Tonans hurling from his potent hand the thunderbolt of war, and shaking the earth by his nod. Then Decius, Curtius, Regulus, and even Iphigenia were introduced in order to illustrate the Sacrifice of the Cross: and parallels were drawn between Socrates, Epaminondas, Phocion, Scipio, and the Author of Christianity, who, however, was not expressly named, the word Jesus not being in the Ciceronian vocabulary, to which the reverend orator strictly confined

* "Ganz unpassende Darstellungen."—*Geschichte der Päpste, &c.*, book iii. § 6, page 412, note.

himself. It would seem certain, however, that Humanism was less hostile to faith than to morals. Pope's lines,

> "A very heathen in the carnal part,
> Yet still a sad good Christian at her heart,"

correctly express most of its votaries. Bayle, indeed, when telling us how Leo X. sent for Pomponazzi to Rome for the purpose of hearing him dispute with Niphus about the immortality of the soul, adds, "not one of the three believed in it." I do not know that there is sufficient evidence for this assertion even as regards Pomponazzi. Certainly, there is no evidence at all for it as regards Leo X. or Niphus. No doubt there were among the leaders of the Renaissance those who looked upon Christianity as a fable. But they were not very numerous, nor can they be deemed specially characteristic of that period. Even in the Ages of Faith we find, from time to time, crass disbelief in the generally accepted dogmas or subtle scepticism regarding them. The prevailing tone of thought among the cultured classes in Italy, to whom the Renaissance movement appealed, was philosophic doubt not pushed to a negative conclusion, and combined with a respect for Christianity not wholly external, which was unaccompanied by any sense of discrepancy.

And this gradually became the tone of thought

throughout the Latin races as from Italy humanistic culture overspread Europe. I do not know that I can find a fairer or more respectable representative of it than Montaigne. Hallam tells us that his essays "make an epoch in literature, less on account of their real importance, or the novel truths they contain, than of their influence upon the taste and the opinions of Europe." * No doubt their influence upon the taste and opinions of Europe was considerable, but it seems to me that the vast popularity they so soon obtained renders them particularly valuable as an index of the actual condition of the European mind. Montaigne, then, is very far from repudiating Christianity. On the contrary, he steadily professes it, and, in a halting perfunctory manner, practises its external obligations: he goes to Mass, and to confession, and eventually dies with the last Sacraments about him. But his religion has small hold over his thoughts or actions. It is apparently little more than conventional. His licentiousness is sometimes gross. Too many pages of his writings are stained by deliberate filthiness and obscenity. He felt indeed "the attractions of truth, but he felt none of its obligations." "The idea of duty was his bugbear and scarecrow." † He does not logically follow out his scepticism, nor

* *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol ii. p. 123.

† Church, *Essay on Montaigne in Oxford Essays for* 1857, p. 276.

consciously introduce it into the sphere to which he relegates religion. "But his views of life and death are absolutely unaffected by his professing the Gospel." *

So much may suffice regarding the relation of the Renaissance to the Claim of Christianity as a religion. Savonarola with the instinct of a saint had detected the Pagan tendencies of the movement, and his prophet voice of denunciation and warning resounds through the closing decade of the fifteenth century. He received a prophet's reward. But the fire which consumed the martyr's body did not burn out his teaching. In him we must doubtless recognise the precursor of the great revival which was to the Catholic Church as life from the dead. It would take me beyond my present limits to trace, even in outline, the growth of that marvellous reaction. I shall conclude this Chapter by touching upon one aspect of the work done by the Jesuits, whose special function was to combat the renascent Heathenism with arms furnished by itself. In the next Chapter we shall have to look at their action from another point of view. Here I shall confine myself to indicating their true position in respect of the Renaissance, and the true answer to the accusations brought against their methods: accusations which are repeated not merely by the popular Protestant

* *Ibid.*

controversialist—"a country gentleman, a navy captain, a half-pay officer with time on his hands [who] will undertake by means of one or two tracts and a set of extracts against Popery, to teach the Pope his own religion"—but by writers of culture and research, in whom, however, prejudices and prepossessions seem hardly less masterful than they are in the sages of the Protestant Alliance.

Now we may say that the exigencies of the age called the Jesuits into existence. And the charges that may be urged against them, if impartially examined, seem to me to amount to this: that they faithfully reflected the intellectual characteristics of their age, and sought to combat it with its own weapons. A short time ago a learned writer dogmatically declared, in a publication specially devoted to higher historical studies: "It is to the Jesuits that we owe the substitution of the study of words for the study of things, of a pedantic scholarship and antiquarianism for the attempt to enter into and appreciate the true spirit of the ancients, which has been made the reproach of modern classical education: all this is very trite."* It is very trite no doubt, but it is not very true. The blame is here put upon the wrong shoulders. The word-spinning and pedantry and antiquarianism—by which, I suppose, is meant

* *English Historical Review*, vol. i. p. 560.

servile worship of antiquity—were not the invention of the Jesuits, but of those Humanists, at whose achievements we have glanced. Erasmus—in his *Dialogus Ciceronianus*, I think it is—introduces us to one of them, who told him "Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone"; and echo answered ὄνε! The Jesuits adopted the educational traditions and methods which they found ready to their hands, and tried to make the best of them. Mr. John Morley, from whom we should hardly expect any praise of the society, feels himself bound to testify, "The wise devotion of the Jesuits to intellectual education in the widest sense then possible, is a partial set off against their mischievous influence on politics and morals." * The former part of this sentence is undoubtedly true. As to the latter, their not holding the political and ethical opinions of Mr. Morley,† can hardly be matter of reproach to the Jesuits. Let us turn to another authority who, not undeservedly, is accounted an oracle of that saving common sense upon which Englishmen pride themselves. "The expulsion of the Jesuits," the Duke of Wellington told Dr. Whewell, "was an evil to Spain and Portugal. It ruined the education of the upper orders. They are now men of no education, no moral and reli-

* *Voltaire*, p. 45.

† Which I have investigated, at some length, in Chap. III. of *A Century of Revolution*.

gious education . . . . and are a worthless set." *

But it is to Mr. Symonds that we must go for the fullest indictment against the Jesuits. In the work which concludes his studies in the Renaissance, they are solemnly arraigned for "their hideous churches, daubed with plaster painted to resemble costly marbles, encrusted with stucco polished to deceive the eye, loaded with geegaws and tinsel, and superfluous ornaments and frescoes, turning flat surfaces into cupolas and arcades; the conceits of their pulpit oratory, its artificial cadences and flowery verbiage, its theatrical appeals to gross sensations; their sickly Ciceronian style, their sentimental books of piety, 'the worse for being warm,' the execrable taste of their poetry, their flimsy philosophy and disingenuous history." † Let us look a little at these accusations, taking them in reverse order. And first I must confess that I have never read any Jesuit poets, and that I have no intention of reading any. I am quite sure, however, that their taste cannot have been more execrable than was the taste of Mr. Symonds's favourite Humanists, who, indeed, were their models of style. Historical science has never been the special domain of the Society. I suppose Pallavicino is their most considerable representative

* Mrs. Stair Douglas's *Life of Dr. Whewell*, p. 270.

† *The Catholic Reaction*, by John Addington Symonds, part i. p. 307.

in this intellectual province. He is a dull writer, certainly. But, as certainly, he is not open to the charge of disingenuousness. Of Jesuit philosophers I believe Mr. Symonds knew as little as I know of Jesuit poets. At all events I am certain that if he had perused any treatise of any of the more notable of them—say, for example, Suarez *De Legibus*—"flimsy" is the last adjective he would have used to describe it. Sentimental books of piety and theatrical appeals to gross sensations are by no means an invention or a monopoly of the Society of Jesus. They are no more to my taste than they were to the taste of Mr. Symonds. Clearly they were to the taste of the age which found in them its spiritual nourishment, and which materialised religion as it materialised poetry and architecture and everything else. Surely it is patent that the Jesuits got their pseudo-classicalism from the intellectual movement, the glorification of which appears to have been the chief purpose of Mr. Symonds's life. And if the Jesuits, by pressing the new Paganism of the Humanists into the service of religion, "wrought miracles and converted thousands,"* as Mr. Symonds allows they did, they might appeal to the authority of the Apostle who said: "I am made all things to all men, that I might, by all means, save some." That this was their guiding principle appears to

* *Ibid.*

me open to no manner of doubt, whatever we may think of some of the applications which they gave to it.

But there are other counts in Mr. Symonds's indictment against the Jesuits. And it may be well to take the present opportunity of briefly considering them. He is not content with what may be urged against Jesuit taste. "The same critique," we are told by him, "applies to Jesuit morality." * He devotes much eloquence to a description of "the Jesuit labyrinth of casuistry, with its windings, turnings, secret chambers, whispering galleries, blind alleys, issues of evasion, the whole vicious and monstrous edifice being crowned with the saving virtue of obedience and the theory of the end justifying the means." And he proceeds: "Thus the inventive genius of the casuist, bent on dissecting immorality and reducing it to classes; the interrogative ingenuity of the confessor pruriently inquisitive into private experience; the apologetic subtlety of the director, eager to supply his penitent with salves and anodynes; were all alike and all together applied to anti-social contamination in matters of lubricity, and to anti-social corruption in matters of dishonesty, fraud, falsehood, illegality, and violence." †

As to the "theory of the end justifying the

* *Ibid.*, p. 308.

† *The Catholic Reaction*, part i. p. 309.

means," I may content myself with observing that no such theory, in Mr. Symonds's sense, has ever been held by any school of moral theologians in the Catholic Church. The commonplaces, "licitus est finis, etiam licita sunt media," and "cui licitus est finis, licita sunt media," merely assert the general philosophical principle that if the end, the complete *opus*, is a good one, due means may be taken for its attainment: not all nor any means, but first innocent means, and secondly means which are not in themselves evil, and which the end, and the end alone, can justify. Examples of this second class are afforded by dangerous surgical operations, such as tracheotomy, lithotomy, amputation. The end of saving life justifies these means. But neither that end, nor any other, would justify adultery or blasphemy.* Of casuistry I will only say that it is an essential part of the science of morals, a necessary dialectic of conscience. In my own very unjesuitical university of Cambridge there is still a professor of it. In itself it is a good thing. Like all good things, it may be abused. I confess that as I turn over the pages of Sanchez and Escobar, I stand aghast at the unsurpassable crudity of their language, and the deplorable fecundity of their imagination. But "abusus non tollit usum." Most people, I suppose, form their opinion of Jesuit casuistry from Pascal.

* *Ibid.*, p. 314.

For myself, my sympathy with the ethical passion which breathes through the *Provincial Letters* is as great as is my admiration of their literary excellence. But assuredly I cannot accept them as a fair statement of the case against the Jesuits.* And here I may claim Voltaire as being on my side. "De bonne foi," he asked, "est-ce par le satire des *Lettres Provinciales* qu'on doit juger la morale des Jésuites"? † You might as fairly judge of it by the satire of Voltaire's own novel *L'Ingénu*, which

* Nor could Dean Church, and he certainly would have been the last to abandon any point which he thought could be honestly maintained on behalf of a teacher to whom he was so devoted. "Pascal was by no means always fair, especially in the detail of his proof. His letters have the exaggeration inseparable from an able, earnest, passionate attack—the exaggeration of a clear statement and lucid arrangement of the case *on one side;* the exaggeration of ridicule and irony; the exaggeration of strong and indignant feeling. Further, they leave unsaid how the system which they attacked grew up; how long custom, and a general use, not confined to the Jesuits, if it had made this system dangerous, had also in all probability, in a measure, corrected it, as it certainly in a degree excused it; and they leave the impression that *that* was a distinct *intention*, which was mainly a *result*, not very coyly accepted and followed up. Further, he leaves unsaid, for he did not on principle acknowledge them, the practical necessities of a popular, and much more of a fashionable religion—much the same under all circumstances, whether resisted as temptations or accepted as facts."—*Essays and Reviews*, by R. W. Church, p. 487.

† Lettre au père Latour, 1746, quoted by Crétineau-Joly, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. iv. p. 43. I cannot find the letter in my own fine copy of Voltaire, in sixty-four volumes (Paris, Antoine-Augustus Renouard, 1819).

is also a literary masterpiece in its way. Every scholar who has investigated the subject is perfectly well aware that very considerable deductions must be made before Pascal's indictment of the Jesuits can be accepted as even approximately fair. As to "the interrogative genius of the confessor," and his anxiety to minister salves and anodynes to inward wounds, I venture to assert that Mr. Symonds might have resorted daily for twelve months to any Jesuit confessor without being asked a single question, and without experiencing the application of any flattering unction to his soul, or of any ethical laudanum to his conscience. And the practice of the confessional in these matters in the nineteenth century is precisely what it was in the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth. Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour did not find the fathers of the society merchants of salves and anodynes.* Mr. Symonds is of opinion that all this was "applied to anti-social contamination in matters of lubricity and to anti-social corruption in matters of dishonesty, fraud, falsehood, illegality, and violence." When I read this vehement rhetoric I ask myself whether Mr. Symonds could possibly have realised what his words mean. They mean this: that men whose whole lives were penance, and pious aspiration, and perpetual toil

* See Jervis's *History of the Church of France*, vol. ii. p. 365.

for others, were all the time engaged in a diabolical conspiracy against religion and morality. No one ever hated the Jesuits worse than Voltaire, who rightly discerned in them the most formidable defenders of the *Infâme*. But Voltaire's strong common sense was enough to preserve him from the grotesquely absurd theory which found favour with Mr. Symonds. "On tâchait," he writes, "de prouver qu'ils avaient un dessein formé de corrompre les mœurs des hommes, dessein qu'aucune secte, qu'aucune société, n'a jamais eu, ni peut avoir." * Surely it is a more rational explanation that these devoted men, whose "obvious enthusiasm and holy lives," † Mr. Symonds confesses, were anxious not to make sin easy but penance possible, in the frightful decadence of morality which, as he himself confesses, was brought about by the Renaissance. ‡ To open wider the strait gate so that more might go in thereat, to broaden the narrow way so that more might find it, was unquestionably their object, whatever may be said of some of the modes by which they sought to effect it.

But "the whole vicious and monstrous edifice," according to Mr. Symonds, "was crowned with the

* *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxvii.

† *The Catholic Reaction*, part i. p. 261.

‡ See p. 160-1.

virtue of obedience." "The obedience of the Jesuit," he insists, "was to be absolute, extending even to the duty of committing sins at a superior's orders."* The Constitutions of the Society, he tells us, expressly provide that "A sin, whether venial or mortal, must be committed, if it is commanded by the superior in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in virtue of holy obedience."† Mr. Symonds was, doubtless, rather an elegant than an accurate scholar. Still, he ought not to have fallen into this "idiomatic mantrap" as Lord Acton once called it. A writer dealing magisterially with such a subject might have been fairly expected to know that *peccati obligatio* does not mean an obligation to commit sin. *Obligare ad peccatum* is the common ecclesiastical phrase by which is expressed the extent of the obligation of a rule or precept, that is how far it can be disobeyed without sin. The words on which Mr. Symonds founds himself are as follows: "Visum est nobis in Domino præter expressum Votum quo Societas Summo Pontifici pro tempore existenti tenetur, ac tria alia essentialia Paupertatis, Castitatis, et Obedientiæ, nullas Constitutiones, Declarationes, vel ordinem ullum vivendi posse obligationem ad peccatum mortale vel veniale inducere, nisi Superior ea in Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, vel in virtute sanctæ Obedientiæ

* *The Catholic Reaction*, part i. p. 264

† *Ibid.*, p. 284.

juberet." * The English of these words is: "It has seemed good to us in the Lord, that saving the express vow † by which the society is bound to the Sovereign Pontiff for the time being, and the three other essential vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, no constitutions, declarations, or any rule of life, shall bind, under pain of mortal or venial sin: unless the superior should enjoin the same in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ or in virtue of holy obedience." Or, to put the matter less technically, except the vows of poverty, chastity,

* The words occur in the Fifth Chapter of the Sixth Part of the Constitutions. I will give the chapter in its entirety.

"*Quod Constitutiones Peccati Obligationem non inducunt.*

"Cum exoptet Societas universas suas Constitutiones, Declarationes, ac vivendi ordinem omnino juxta nostrum Institutum, nihil ulla in re declinando, observari; oportet etiam nihilominus suos omnes securos esse, vel certe adjuvari, ne in laqueum ullius peccati, quod ex vi Constitutionum hujusmodi, aut ordinationum proveniat, incidant: Visum est nobis in Domino præter expressum Votum, quo Societas Summo Pontifici pro tempore existenti tenetur, ac tria alia essentialia Paupertatis, Castitatis, et Obedientiæ, nullas Constitutiones, Declarationes, vel ordinem ullum vivendi posse obligationem ad peccatum mortale vel veniale inducere; nisi Superior ea in Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, vel in virtute sanctæ Obedientiæ juberet; quod in rebus, vel personis illis, in quibus judicabitur, quod ad particularem uniuscujusque, vel ad universale bonum multum conveniet, fieri poterit; et loco timoris offensæ succedat amor omnis perfectionis et desiderium: ut major gloria et laus Christi Creatoris, ac Domini Nostri consequatur."

† This vow is peculiar to the Society of Jesus. See the bull of Pius III., *Regimini militantis ecclesiæ*.

and obedience, common to the Jesuits with all religious orders, and the special vow of obedience to the Pope peculiar to the society, no rules or regulations—bylaws we may say—are of such a solemn nature that non-compliance with them would amount to a sin, save in those very special cases where the superior formally commands compliance in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ or in virtue of holy obedience. In many old orders all breaches of the rule were considered sins, as such, that is *qua* breaches. In the Jesuit order the obligation is limited. Breach of the three essential vows, or of the one special vow, is a sin. Breach of the provisions of the constitutions, declarations, or other regulations, is not in itself sin, although it may become sin in the case stated, because a superior who commands in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in virtue of holy obedience, cannot be disobeyed without sin.

> What good should follow this if this were done?
> What harm undone? Deep harm to disobey,
> Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Of course there is no question whatever of obeying a command to commit a sin. No such command could be lawfully either given or executed. It would be void *ipso facto*. To comply with it would be sin. The vows, that of obedience included, bind only to good, and to the greater good. It is almost humiliating to have to expend

so many words upon so plain a matter. One might surely have thought it too monstrous an absurdity to be seriously entertained by any intelligent man, that commands to commit sin could be given, I will not say by persons whose saintly lives are beyond question, but by any rational being, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"—of all names!—or "in virtue of *holy* obedience"—of all things! But this amazing blunder of Mr Symonds affords a painful instance of the way in which a mind, not naturally uncandid, may be completely warped by prejudice, and hopelessly misled by implicit reliance upon untrustworthy authorities.

So much may suffice, for the purposes of this Chapter, concerning the Jesuits and the Renaissance. I shall now go on to speak of that other movement, which is often described a further Act in the same great European drama—the Protestant Reformation.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE REFORMATION.

We are sometimes told that the Protestant Reformation was the work of the Renaissance. It appears to me that this view is tenable, if at all, only with large reservations. The Renaissance served the cause of the Protestant Reformation in three ways. In the first place, as I have observed in the last Chapter, the Roman Court was deeply infected by the Paganism of the Italian Humanists, and this, doubtless, cast much discredit upon the Catholic Church, and afforded an ample theme for the invectives of those who separated themselves from her. Again, the leaders of the new learning were indefatigable in exposing religious abuses and in ridiculing popular superstitions, and unquestionably one effect of their labours was to impair popular respect for ecclesiastical institutions and authority. Once more their translations of and commentaries upon the Sacred Scriptures doubtless supplied weapons to the preachers of the new doctrines. But certain it is, also, that the Renaissance never allied itself with the religious revolt

of which Luther may be considered the initiator. The spirit of the Renaissance was universal, not particular; and, so far, it was in sympathy with the ecumenical idea of Catholicism. Its tone was, so to speak, aristocratic. It addressed itself to the intelligent, the cultivated—to statesmen, artists, philosophers, savants. Protestantism, on the contrary, originally appealed to popular instincts, good and bad, and especially to that suspicion of authority and love of change ever latent in the multitude.

Perhaps the relation between the two movements is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the career of Erasmus. He is the chief representative of the Renaissance in its best aspects: in breadth of erudition, refinement of taste, suppleness of intellect, and probity of life, the foremost man of all that world. In him we have a scholar of a very different type and temper from any of the Italian Humanists. We now regard him as the ripest fruit, and the wholesomest, of the Revival of Learning, embodying in himself all that the Western nations had really gained by the study of the ancients for over a century. And M. Nisard does not speak too strongly in asserting "Toute le renaissance littéraire et religieuse de l'Europe occidentale, au XVI.e siècle a convergé vers Erasme." * The more I survey his

* *Renaissance et Réforme*, vol. i. p. 110.

life and study his writings, the deeper is my respect for his "great, injured name." He was not a profound thinker—it was not an age of profound thought—but he was an eminently sane thinker. He was no religious mystic; and I can quite understand St. Ignatius Loyola, who was one, complaining of the aridity of his writings. He dwelt on the lower levels of humanity, and is well portrayed in Pope's line, "Good Erasmus in an honest mean." He was a preacher of rational godliness, a form of religion quite as legitimate as the more spiritual form: and better suited to temperaments such as his, not naturally enthusiastic: a form which, too, has its saints, among whom Sir Thomas More, ascetic as he was, is eminently seen. But Erasmus, if not gifted with the intuitive perception of truth, the ardent spiritual affections, which are the endowment of some exalted spirits, was of an eminently sensitive and receptive nature. He strongly experienced and accurately reflected the currents of thought which passed through his time. In the extreme complexity of his character he is again a true representative of the epoch; and most helpful for the right understanding of the two great movements found in it.

Now Erasmus was first and before all things a man of learning. And he saw in the decadent religious orders the stronghold of ignorance.* He was pro-

* Professor Brewer, whose impartiality is as indubitable as his learning, gives the following account of the condition of

foundly versed in Christian antiquity. And he found essential verities of religion overlaid in the popular mind by superstitions at best puerile and often degrading. He was well aware that the age was an age of intellectual fermentation. He could not help seeing that the Church was passing through a grave crisis. When he visited Italy in 1506 one of the first spectacles which he met was Julius II. at the head of an army. The spectacle made a deep impression upon his mind, as signally illustrating the secularity into which the Papacy had sunk. What other tokens of it, and how abundant, he encountered during his three years' residence in Italy may be inferred from the last

the Religious Orders in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the account would, on the whole, fairly apply to the rest of Europe: "Their influence over public opinion, at least in the southern counties of England, had been entirely eclipsed, and they had done nothing to recover it. That in so large a body of men, so widely dispersed, seated for so many centuries in the richest and fairest estates of England, for which they were mainly indebted to their own skill, perseverance, and industry, discreditable members were to be found (and what literary chiffonier, raking in the scandalous annals of any profession, cannot find filth and corruption?) is likely enough; but that the corruption was either so black or so general as party spirit would have us believe, is contrary to all analogy, and is unsupported by impartial and contemporary evidence. The general complaint against them is that of ignorance and bigotry; and—what an Englishman would now consider as the root of all evil—the absence of any ostensible employment."—*Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic*, vol i. p. lxxix., &c., Intro.

Chapter. But side by side with worldly and dissolute prelates given over to the new Paganism, with slothful and ignorant monks dishonouring the great names of St. Augustine, St. Benedict, and St. Francis, there were many ecclesiastics, at once highly cultured and deeply religious, looking for and hastening unto the Catholic revival. With these the sympathy of Erasmus was complete.

The tone of his mind is accurately reflected in his *Praise of Folly*, published shortly after his return from Italy, in 1509, and dedicated to his illustrious friend Sir Thomas More. It must, of course, be remembered that this pungent pamphlet is avowedly satire. And no satirist is tied to precise presentation of facts. It is Folly who praises herself—"Encomium audietis meum ipsius, hoc est Stultitiæ"—and she claims the largest licence:

> "I must have liberty
> Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
> To blow on whom I please: for so fools have:
> Invest me in my motley: give me leave
> To speak my mind, and I will, through and through,
> Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
> If they will patiently receive my medicine."

They did not patiently receive it; and no wonder. The *Praise of Folly* contains as many exaggerations as Pascal's *Provincial Letters*. And, doubtless, it was not specially felicitous in the time of its publication. It was bad policy, as his friend

Dorpius warned Erasmus, "to adorn with asses' ears the heads of theologians and priests just when they were manifesting for him a sincere admiration." And, unquestionably, Erasmus paid dearly for his imprudence in the distrust with which he was thenceforth regarded by the vast majority of the clergy. The substantial truth of the indictment of ecclesiastical abuses contained in his Declamation—that is the name which he himself gave his pamphlet—is as indisputable as its literary power. Notable too is it how the author, from time to time, laying aside his habitual tone of reasoned irony, rises into scathing denunciation which recalls the prophetic utterances of Dante and Savonarola. Take, for example, that fine passage —perhaps the finest in the work—in which he brands as the most dangerous enemies of the Church, "those impious Pontiffs whose silence concerning Christ makes Him forgotten; who enchain Him by their venal laws; who disfigure Him by their false interpretations; and who by their scandalous lives crucify Him afresh." We must ever remember that in the devotion of Erasmus to religion was the source of his keen sense of the corruptions in the Church, of his ardent longing for her reformation. In his hardiest phrases he never fails in respect for her constitution and dogmas. While satirising ignorant and slothful monks he utters no word against the monastic institute. While denouncing the vices

of Popes, he recognises the Papacy as of divine appointment and of ecclesiastical necessity. It is not too much to say that he was even animated by the feeling expressed in the words of the sacred writer—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." But he is indignant with sophistical theologians who say Peace, Peace, where there is no peace: or if peace at all, the peace of paralysis and decay. He knew that the only way to true peace was through the truth: that the purification of the Church was the only means to her preservation, and he believed—rightly, as the event showed—that she possessed a power of moral recovery.

Such was the attitude of Erasmus towards the Catholic Church from first to last. And it sufficiently accounts for his attitude towards Luther. Between the two men there can have been little in common. They were too completely opposed in character and intellect. With Luther the reformer, inveighing against the scandals of indulgences, Erasmus cordially sympathised. With Luther the heresiarch, rejecting Papal authority and manipulating at his pleasure Catholic dogmas, Erasmus was far from sympathising. Writing in 1529, in anticipation of approaching death, he protests that never, for one moment, has he thought of disturbing the hierarchical constitution of the Church, or been wanting in veneration for her Sacraments: that sects and

schisms had ever been his special abhorrence:—"a sectis et schismatibus unice semper abhorrui": and that the sins of men supplied no warrant for rejecting the doctrines of the faith—"non oportuit quemquam, ob hominum improbos mores, a piis Ecclesiæ dogmatibus recedere." * The testimony which he thus bears of himself is true. The course pursued by Luther shocked alike his reason and his religion.

It is from the publication of Luther's book *On the Captivity of Babylon* in 1520 that we may date the breach between the two men. And the breach ever widened, as Luther was hurried on by the logic of his own acts to desert one after another of the ancient religious traditions of Europe. Up to the time of Luther's declaration of revolt, the work of Erasmus had been largely apologetic and evangelical. He aimed at softening the manners of men; at diffusing the true spirit of the Gospel; he was by habit and temperament averse from theological controversy. It was at the request of Pope Adrian that he undertook to write against Luther and in defence of the Catholic faith. Unwillingly he turned aside from contemplating "the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies" and embarked "in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes" wherein his course was thenceforth to lie. He had desired reform, not revolution: the cleansing of

* Ep. 1034.

the Church from within, not her destruction from without. When Luther's movement falsified his hopes, he separated himself from it and opposed it. In him we may see the Renaissance definitely taking part against the Protestant Reformation. His Epistles are full of complaints concerning its disastrous effects alike on religion and learning. Its consequences, both ethical and political, shocked his moral sense. "Erasmus can do nothing but cavil and flout" said Luther in his *Table Talk*. But Erasmus did much more than that, as Luther knew full well. It can not be doubted that in throwing the weight of his unique personal influence, and of the intellectual movement of which he was the chief, against the Protestant Reformation, he largely contributed to check its progress, and to bring it into discredit with the cultivated and thoughtful. And the offer of a Cardinal's hat, made to him by Pius III., was a fitting, however tardy, recognition of his services in vindicating the unity of the Catholic Church, and the prerogatives of the Pope as the instrument of that unity.

And here I am led to notice a strange remark of Dr. Döllinger in the Introduction to his learned and thoughtful book *The Church and the Churches*. "The separation," he tells us, "did not result from the abuses in the Church. It was for the

sake of doctrine that the separation took place." He is speaking specially of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. And surely this is not an accurate account of it. Had it not been for the abuses—the crying abuses—attending the preaching of Leo X.'s pardon, Luther would, humanly speaking, never have swerved from the rigid orthodoxy which characterised his early years. Niebuhr was of opinion that if those abuses had been promptly discountenanced, the Protestant Reformation might have been retarded for a long time.* No doubt Luther's ninety-five theses concerning indulgences contained propositions which accomplished theologians, like Cardinal Cajetan, could not fail to regard as untenable and unsound. Equally certain is it that on the practical question his view was sound enough. There is a vast amount of testimony concerning the reality and gravity of the scandals which called forth Luther's protest. The "gentil pardoner," who lives for us in the verse of Chaucer, is no invention of the poet.

> "For my entent is nat but for to winne,
> And nothing for correccioun of sinne."

There seems to be no sufficient reason for doubting the story that Tetzel, after pourtraying all manner of enormities, would end his sermon,

* *Reminiscences of M. Niebuhr*, by F. Lieber, p. 153.

"Well all this is expiated the moment your money chinks in the Pope's chest." * It was one of the sharp sayings of Erasmus, "Christ drove out of the Temple those who bought and sold: but those who buy and sell have driven Christ out of the Church." The saintly Adrian VI. has left on record his conviction that the troubles which he was called upon to face had arisen "propter peccata hominum, maxime sacerdotum et ecclesiæ prælatorum.† As a matter of fact, there is much evidence to support Professor Brewer's statement: "The sale of indulgences was a project devised between the temporal and spiritual rulers of Europe for collecting subsidies from the poor and labouring classes."‡

* Erasmus writes in his *Praise of Folly*: "Nam quid dicam de iis, qui sibi fictis scelerum condonationibus suavisime blandiuntur, ac purgatorii spatia veluti clepsydris metiuntur, sæcula, annos, menses, dies, horas, tanquam e tabula mathematica, citra ullum errorem dimetientes. . . . Hic mihi puta negociator aliquis, aut miles, aut judex, abjecto ex tot rapinis unico nummulo, universam vitæ Lernam semel expurgatam putat, totque perjuria, tot libidines, tot ebrietates, tot rixas, tot cædes, tot imposturas, tot perfidias, tot proditiones existimat velut ex pacto redimi; et ita redimi ut jam liceat ad novum scelerum orbem de integro reverti."

† In his letter to his legate Chieregato, as to which see Pallavicino, l. ii. c. vii. The original of the letter is given in *Fasciculus Rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*, printed in 1535.

‡ *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic*, vol. ii. p. i. (Intro.). He also observes, with truth: "The temporal sovereigns of Europe made it a condition of allowing the indulgence to be preached, that they were to receive a portion of the money realised by it."—*Ibid.*, p. cciv.

It cannot be doubted that the rulers of the Church, in their greed of these disreputable gains,* were blind to the real significance of Luther's movement, and were largely responsible for the catastrophe which ensued. Whether or no it be true that Leo X. on his election observed to his brother Giuliano, "Since God has given us the Papacy let us enjoy it," these words express, aptly enough, the spirit he was of. His Bull against Luther is said to have been drawn up by the most eminent Ciceronians of his court. Its Latinity is unimpeachable. But it manifests an appalling misapprehension of the gravity of the situation. Carlyle did not as a rule write wisely about matters affecting the Catholic Church. But he appears well warranted when after telling us how Luther burnt the Papal Bull at the Elster Gate of Wittenberg, while Wittenberg looked on with shoutings, he adds: "The Pope should not have provoked that shout: it was the shout of awakened nations." It was the signal for a revolt against accumulated abuses which had grown intolerable. Moral debts increase with compound interest. The perpetual postponement of their payment does but mean eventual bankruptcy.

It appears to me, then, that Luther's revolt was directly due to abuses. And in this connection it is necessary to remember the venerable dictum, "He is the schismatic who causes the schism." As for

* "Pravos quæstus." It is the expression used by the Council of Trent. Sess. xxv. *Decret. de Indul.*

Luther himself, I confess that, quite apart from his opinions and his works, I do not like him. I dislike his arrogance and self-sufficiency; his ignorance and coarseness; his violent imagination and bellicose temperament; and the curious mixture of mysticism and materialism which is ever cropping up in him. His sincerity, his personal religiousness, I see no reason to doubt. And certainly he possessed in a heroic degree that virtue of courage—*Tapferkeit*—claimed by Goethe as the characteristic of his race. There are few finer spectacles in history than that which he offered at the Diet of Worms: "Here stand I; I can do no other; so help me God; Amen." His theological opinions seem entitled in themselves to small consideration. That he preserved some Catholic doctrines, rejected others, and invented some new dogmas of his own, is not intrinsically a very important or a very interesting fact. But the practical outcome of his action in this respect was of the utmost gravity. The antinomian tenet of justification which he fabricated, was productive of far worse results in the lives of men, than had been the traffic in indulgences so strongly denounced by him. It was a direct blow to the Claim of Christianity as a teacher of morality, for, as Erasmus pointed out,* it overthrew fundamental ideas of our reason—the ideas of merit and demerit, of Divine Justice and

* In the work *De libero arbitrio.*

of human freedom, which enter into the ethical concept. Again, his doctrine as to the Sacred Scriptures and private judgment was directly hostile to the Claims of Christianity both as a teacher of religion, and as an organised polity, a Church.

Here, indeed, is the chief significance of his career. That every man should examine for himself theological questions, taking as his standard the Bible, and decide them, according to that standard, by his private judgment—such is the substance of his teaching as to the rule of faith. I am writing here, from the point of view, not of a theologian but of a publicist. And my object just now is to show the outcome of this doctrine of the subjective interpretation of the Bible by individuals. To do that I must, however, say a very few words concerning the doctrine itself.

That a right of private judgment exists, then, I am far from denying. It springs from the individuality of intelligence, from the very fact of human personality. The question is, what are the subjects on which the right is properly exercised? Manifestedly there are things of which the individual intelligence is in a position to judge with individual authority. Such are—for example—our own private affairs, facts which may be called portions and parcels of us, as existing in our own particular life and experience: "the things of a man," as St. Paul speaks, which "the spirit of a man that is in him" alone knows. Such are, again,

matters scientific, critical, aesthetic, which we have specially made our own. Here our private judgment is entitled to give sentence, not indeed infallibly, absolutely, and irreformably, but with a peculiar prerogative, a recognised right. But if such things, manifestedly, fall within the domain of private judgment, others there are which, as manifestedly, fall within the domain of public judgment. Take, as instances of them, the affairs of a trading company, or the affairs of a nation. This public judgment is, of course, made up of many private judgments, of very varying value, and operative for what they are worth. The individual shareholder has a right to his private judgment concerning the business of his company; the individual subject to his private judgment about the concerns of the State. More, they have a right that their individual judgments shall contribute in due measure to the formation of the general judgment.

Just so is it in the ecclesiastical polity, the religious incorporation, the Civitas Dei. The judgment of the Catholic Church in matters of faith and morals represents the *sensus fidelium*, the collective judgment of the corpus Christianum, the public opinion of the world-wide religious community. The doctrines of the Catholic Church are not the arbitrary inventions of Popes or Councils. They lived in her consciousness before they were formulated in decrees and enjoined

in canons. They are the expressions of the religious beliefs and pious instincts of "the Christian people," cast into dogmatic decisions, and published with solemn sanction. This is what is meant by the Catholic principle that the Church judges in faith and morals. Such judgments are public judgments, and are religiously believed to be protected from error by a Divine promise. Luther's principle is that each individual is competent to form a theological creed and a moral code for himself by consulting the Bible: that—according to his own forcible exposition—"even a miller's wench, or a child nine years of age, who decides according to the Gospel,* may understand the Scriptures better than Pope and Councils, and all scholars collected together." It is obviously a principle of disintegration. A method of obtaining religious truth it, as obviously, is not: for truth is one: but the results thus obtained are multitudinous and irreconcilable. Nor can it be otherwise, since the minds which judge are constituted with almost infinite differences; and the different evidence accessible to each of them is apprehended differently, construed differently, estimated differently by each.

To which we must add that the book proposed by Luther as the subject whereon private judgment

* "According to the Gospel" is, in Luther, a technical expression, and means according to his doctrine of justification.

should be exercised—a book, or rather a miscellany of books, so far off in details from modern life, yet in essence ever nigh to the human heart—lends itself to endless interpretations. Vinet has well observed: "On ne voit dans la Bible que ce qu'on veut. On abonde dans le sens de la vérité qu'on a choisie: en sorte que, dans le fait, chacun a sa Bible. Tous les oiseaux de l'air, depuis l'oiseau de la nuit jusqu' à l'aigle l'ami du soleil, font leurs nids dans les rameaux de cet arbre immense."* The old distich sums the matter up:

> "Hic liber est in quo quærit sua dogmata quisque;
> Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua."†

This is a truth of which Luther soon became aware. While proclaiming the autonomy of private judgment, he was in fact—perhaps half unconsciously—endeavouring to substitute in faith and morals for an authority, universally recognized, and claiming a divine warrant, his own personal dictatorship resting merely on his own personal affirmation. It was manifestedly an insecure

* See the fine passage in *L'Église et les Confessions de Foi*, *p.* 29.

† I do not know to whom we are indebted for these lines, or for the free and effective English version of them:

> One day, at least, in every week,
> The sects of every kind,
> Their doctrines here are sure to seek
> And just as sure to find.

foundation. As he had applied his private judgment to Catholic dogmas, so his opponents, nay his disciples, applied their private judgment to his dogmas, with still more destructive results. More, even in his lifetime, they began to apply it to the volume which he had sought to substitute for the teaching Church. The instinct which led him to regard Erasmus as a most dangerous foe was not at fault. For Erasmus, by his edition of the Greek Testament, was the founder of scientific Biblical exegesis, the pioneer of the modern critical method, destined, in the event, to shatter hopelessly the view of the Sacred Writings which is the very corner stone of the Lutheran system.

But to dwell on that matter would take me far beyond my present point, which is this: that Luther was driven, by the necessity of the case, to seek for some positive jurisdiction, "ut sit finis controversiarum." Where was he to find it? Obviously he himself did not possess it in his own private judgment, and to a prophetic mission and direct revelation from on high, he made no pretence. The jurisdiction of the Universal Church, claiming, in St. Cyril's words, quoted in the First Chapter, "to teach catholically, and without defect, all dogmas which ought to come home to the knowledge of all men," he had repudiated. Nothing remained but to invoke the aid of the civil power. And this he proceeded to do, with his wonted vigour and violence. "It became the

recognized Protestant doctrine," Döllinger observes, "that princes had the highest juridical office over religion, doctrine, and the Church: and that it was their right and their calling to suppress every opinion in matters of faith differing from their own. . . . And so arose a despotism the equal of which had never been seen before. . . . The Protestant princes were not only Popes in their own country, they were more: they were able to do what no Pope had ever dreamed of doing. Every Pope knew that his power was conservative, given for the preservation of the doctrine that had been transmitted to him, and that any attempt by him to alter the teaching of the Church would infallibly be frustrated by a universal resistance. To the Protestant princes, however, it had been said, and they themselves believed and declared it, that their power in religious matters was entirely unlimited: and that in the use of it they need attend to no other standard than their own consciences. . . . Luther himself reckons it as a matter to his especial credit that he had, in this way, benefited the temporal powers." * The practical outcome of the Lutheran Reformation in the countries which received it, was to obliterate from the minds and consciences of the people the belief that Christian men live under another and a higher law than the law of

* *Kirche und Kirchen*, pp. 53-56.

the State: to efface that distinction between the secular and the spiritual domain, the things of Cæsar and the things of God, which had been the great gift of Christianity to civilization: a gift purchased with the blood of its Founder and of His countless martyrs: to deny the claim made by the Church as a spiritual empire one and universal, a world-wide society perfect and complete in herself.

The effect of the Protestant Reformation in England was similar, and is more easily seen: for the ecclesiastical revolution began here where it ended in Germany. The tradition dominant in this country for three centuries represented the Anglican Reformation, just as Döllinger represents the Lutheran Reformation, to have been wrought for the sake of doctrine. Thus Johnson defined the word Reformation as "the change of religion from the corruptions of Popery to the primitive state," and our popular histories have been the vehicles and mouthpieces of that belief.*

* So also, the *Book of Homilies*: "Honour be to God, who did put light in the heart of His faithful and true minister of most famous memory, King Henry the Eighth, and gave him the knowledge of His word, and an earnest affection to seek His glory, and to put away all such superstitious and pharisaical sects" [viz. the religious orders] "by antichrist invented, and set up again the true word of God and glory of His most blessed name, as He gave the like spirit unto the most noble and famous princes, Josaphat, Josias, and Ezechias."—*The Third Part of the Sermon of Good Works.*

"They have presented the Anglican Reformation from the Elizabethan point of view," * the point of view taken by Foxe and Strype, defended by Burnet, assumed, as a matter of course, by subsequent writers down to almost within our own time, and impressed upon the mind of the people, as is usual, by epithets. Englishmen were taught from their childhood to talk of Henry VIII. as "bluff," of Elizabeth as "good," of the Reformers as "glorious," of Cranmer, in particular, as "honest," of Mary I. and Bonner as "bloody"; of the religious changes of the sixteenth century as "happy"; of the thousand years England passed in Catholic unity as "the dark times of Popish superstition."

The day, we may well hope, is now fairly over when this view would be put forward by any writer of repute. The actual facts, so long buried under a mass of misconception and fable, have to a very great extent been brought to light, and established beyond the possibility of doubt. The guides so long unquestionably followed, have been effectually discredited.† Of Foxe, the martyro-

* Brewer, *Letters and Documents*, &c., vol. ii. part i. p. ccxxvii. (Intro.), note. So Dr. Maitland: "We have received almost all that is popularly known of things and persons belonging to the Reformation from Puritan sources."—*Essays on the Reformation in England*, p. 22.

† Curiously enough Sanders, long under reprobation as a strange and extravagant liar, has been proved singularly well

logist, the very fountain-head of the tradition for so many generations in possession of the English mind, Mr. Brewer observes, "Had he been an honest man, his carelessness and credulity would have incapacitated him from being a trustworthy historian. Unfortunately he was not honest; he tampered with the documents that came into his hands, and freely indulged in those very faults of suppression and equivocation for which he condemned his opponents." * Strype, a writer of higher character, has not fared well in the examination to which he has been subjected by Dr. Maitland and others. Burnet is convicted of habitual carelessness and inaccuracy by a

informed and accurate. Thus, in an article which appeared in the *Saturday Review* of October 3, 1868, and which is understood to be from the very competent pen of Mr. Pocock, we read: "Sanders is in general, as regards facts, trustworthy, and his work must take rank as a first-class authority. . . . . We would recommend any one who wishes to get a clear idea of the political and religious movements of the sixteenth century to read Sanders' book, *De Schismate Anglicano*, as presenting a more discriminating account of the various disturbances of the Church and State than can be found in so small a compass anywhere else."

* Brewer, *Letters and Papers*, &c., vol. i. p. lx. (Intro.), note. Foxe appears to have acquired very soon the reputation he enjoyed. Thus Warner writes (temp. Eliz.):—

"So dyde the gracious mother of
Our now most gracious Queen,
Whose zeale in reverent Fox his works
Authenticall is seen.

Albion's England, book viii. chap. xxxviii.

multitude of critics, among whom Mr. Pocock is conspicuous. And with the credit of Foxe, Strype, and Burnet, the credit of their copyists has also disappeared, while other and more trustworthy sources of information have been opened. In particular, access has been open to a vast mass of original authorities, by which a flood of light has been shed upon well nigh every point of doubt and difficulty.

The general result is that the old Protestant tradition has almost completely disappeared. In the early years of the century Lord Macaulay, writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, declared that the Reformation in England "sprang from brutal passion," and was "nurtured by selfish policy;" that the "bluff" monarch who originated it was a "shameless tyrant"; that "of those who had any important share in bringing it about, Ridley was, perhaps, the only person who did not consider it a mere political job;" and in a few pages, perhaps among the most masterly which ever came from his pen, disposed, finally, of the pretensions to honesty, made on behalf of the singular martyr, who "rose into favour by serving Henry in the disgraceful affair of his first divorce;" who, "a supple, timid, interested courtier;" was "equally false to political and religious obligations"; who "conformed backwards and forwards as the king changed his mind;" and who "died solely because he could not help it," "never retracting

his recantation till he found he had made it in vain," and that he could not succeed in purchasing "by another apostasy the power of burning men better and braver than himself." * These utterances aroused much consternation at the time, and were regarded, very generally, as little better than flat blasphemy. They are now the commonest of commonplaces, familiar, as Macaulay would have said, to every schoolboy. If any fact of history is certain it is this: that in the ecclesiastical change wrought by Henry VIII. no religious motive had place. Lust of woman, lust of lucre, lust of power, were Henry's sole springs of action. The Catholic Creed he left as it was, merely detaching the Church in England from Catholic unity and proclaiming himself its Supreme Head.†

* See his "Essay on Hallam's Constitutional History," *Works*, vol. v. pp. 172-175.

† The change wrought by Henry VIII. involved his assumption of the entire spiritual jurisdiction, the whole ecclesiastical authority previously exercised in this country by the Supreme Pontiff. This is absolutely clear from the language of the 26 Henry VIII. c. 1—the Act of Supremacy. Elizabeth did not revive that Act, no doubt because as a woman she shrank from assuming the title of Supreme Head of the Church bestowed by it upon the Sovereign. But although she did not take to herself that title, she took all the authority implied therein, by the first Act of her reign: "An Act to restore to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the estates ecclesiastical and spiritual, and abolishing all foreign powers repugnant to the same." I may be permitted to refer, in this connection, to chap. i. of *A Manual of the Law specially affecting Catholics*, by W. S. Lilly and J. E. P. Wallis, where the subject is fully discussed.

Nothing is more misleading than to speak of the ecclesiastical policy of Henry VIII. or of Elizabeth as emancipatory. It was indeed emancipatory as regarded themselves, for it freed them from the last restraints which hung loosely enough upon their authority. But it was not emancipatory as regarded the people. For them it simply substituted King Henry for Pope Clement, Queen Elizabeth for Pope Pius, as supreme governor in matters ecclesiastical. Henry VII. had overthrown well-nigh all the civil liberties of his subjects. Henry VIII. crushed the spiritual power*—he found it reduced to a shadow

* Professor Blunt, in a work which was long, and possibly is still, a text-book on its subject at Cambridge, writes: "In transferring the supremacy from the Pope to the King, the Church of England did not act unadvisedly. Nothing could be more inexpedient for the good government of the country or its spiritual improvement, than that there should be in it two sovereign heads; and how was the inconvenience to be avoided, except by making one and the same person, in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, supreme?"—*Sketch of the Reformation in England*, 18th ed., p. 131. The statement that the Church of England did not act unadvisedly in transferring the supremacy from the Pope to the King is curious. One might as well say that an unarmed traveller does not act unadvisedly when handing his purse to the highwayman who, pistol in hand, demands his money or his life. It is a notorious fact that the act of Convocation which Prof. Blunt had in view, was extorted by the penalties of *præmunire* hanging over the heads of the clergy. The subject is exhaustively discussed in an article contributed to the *Dublin Review* by Dr. Lingard in May, 1840. The last free act of the old spiritualty of England was their petition, in 1554, for reconciliation with the Holy See.

—which in earlier ages had been strong enough to curb the licence of Norman and Angevine. It was the finishing stroke of Tudor absolutism, bringing, as it did, the consciences of men into captivity to the royal authority. And this was why Catholic and Puritan alike resisted it unto death. The whole battle between Henry VIII. and the Holy See turned upon the question of the royal supremacy: and that question meant this: whether the spiritual or the secular power should be supreme in the domain of religion.

"Every man," writes Professor Brewer, "who cares to read the history of those times feels, at once, that this is *the* question, this is the keystone of the Reformation; all other topics dwindle into insignificance beside it. This is the real point at issue between the advocates of the old and the new system. . . . No distinction [between civil and religious crimes] existed at the time in the mind either of sovereign or of people; the King, as spiritual head of the Church, assumed to himself the right of punishing such offences, not as contrary to the laws of the State, but as contrary to what he was pleased to determine was the law of God—offences as much against his spiritual as against his temporal power. . . . When he transferred to himself the supremacy of the Church, he transferred with it all the powers which the Church had ever exercised for the punishment of heresy or disobedience to its authority. If the Pope was the Bishop of bishops, so was he: if the Pope could of himself determine controversies of faith, so did he. Whether the doctrine of purgatory, or of the sacrament of penance, or of the worship of saints were or were not to constitute part of the creed, and of the teachings of the Church of England, depended upon the King alone. It is true that he did not administer the sacraments and ordain priests and bishops; but if any man had questioned his power to do so, he would have incurred the

penalty of high treason. 'A bishop,' says Cranmer, 'may make a priest by the Scripture, and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them.' In common with other reformers, Cranmer looked upon all spiritual functions as absolutely dependent on the will of the King, as temporal commissions, like those of any other magistrate."*

In England, as elsewhere, Protestantism, represents—such is its inner meaning—the disallowance of that Claim of Christianity to be a spiritual empire, whole in itself, and extending throughout the world, which had been accepted as an integral part of its mission from the days of its Divine Founder. "The essence of the movement called the Reformation, in all the different forms which it assumed in various European countries, is not the denial of one or another article of the Catholic creed, but the rejection of ecclesiastical unity and universality, and of the Supreme Pastorate which is the *Sacramentum Unitatis.* Hence the appropriateness of the name Protestant, because it implied nothing positive, and might be used, indifferently, by all who protested against and threw off the authority of the Church."†

So much may suffice to exhibit what appears to me the real significance of the Protestant Reformation: an event, in some respects, of a calamitous

* *English Studies*, pp. 302-333.

† *A Manual of the Law specially affecting Catholics*, p. 2. On this subject see Möhler's *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. iii. p. 132.

importance unequalled in the annals of Christianity. In comparison with it all former schisms seem inconsiderable. The Donatists drew away from Catholic unity the Christians of North Africa, and at one time numbered in their communion some four hundred sees. But the secure judgment of the world condemned them, and the event justified the condemnation: in the seventh century of our era they are gone: we seek them, and their place can nowhere be found. The Monophysite schism, once so prevailing, still lives, if life it can be called, in the Coptic and Armenian, the Abyssinian and Jacobite Churches. Of the Nestorian community, which in the eleventh century extended from China to Jerusalem, and whose Patriarch had twenty-five metropolitans under him, only a remnant of some seventy thousand is left. The Greek Church indeed is with us to this day as a vast body of professing Christians. And its eighty-five millions, as they are reckoned, holding well-nigh all Catholic doctrines, but separate from Catholic unity, make it an imposing phenomenon, on paper. But practically, since the fall of Constantinople, it has done little to prejudice the ecumenical claims of Catholicism. It is manifestly local or national: the creature, in the Turkish Empire, of the Sultan, in the Russian, of the Czar. It lacks that power of propagation which, as I have observed in a former Chapter, is a note of a Church's life. De Maistre has remarked, with equal force and

truth, "All the Churches separated from the Holy See at the beginning of the twelfth century may be compared to frozen carcasses, the form of which cold has preserved. This cold is the ignorance that was destined to last longer for them than for us: for it has pleased God to concentrate, until a new order of things shall arise, all human science in our Western countries. As soon as its warm breath shall have blown on those Churches then will happen what according to the laws of nature ought to happen: the ancient form will be dissolved, and only dust will remain."*

But let us look a little at the actual effect of Protestantism on the Catholic Church. When the popular impulse in its favour had waned, and the bodies of a hundred thousand peasants slaughtered in the Rebellion which was the direct outcome of Luther's doctrines, showed how little it could be regarded as a movement towards liberty, it was sustained by nobles who coveted ecclesiastical property, and by princes who saw in it an instrument for the advancement of their own prerogative.† It allied itself with the monarchical absolutism which was then arising throughout Europe, upon the ruins of the free institutions that, in one form or another, had prevailed throughout the Middle Ages. It invented, to support the

* *Le Pape*, book v. c. 2.

† So Erasmus had foretold in 1526. See Ep. 843.

pretensions of kings, the monstrous doctrine of their immediate divine right—a doctrine utterly opposed to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the other great lights of the medieval school—the effect of which was to place the liberty of the subject at the mercy of the ruler. By the middle of the sixteenth century it had detached from Catholic unity, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Saxony, Hesse, the Palatinate, and a large part of Switzerland. In France it was a power in the state, treating on almost equal terms with the king. In the Low Countries its adherents were counted by hundreds of thousands. In Bavaria it had a majority in the estates. Poland and Hungary seemed on the verge of embracing it.

True it is, as I shall presently point out, that some of the territory thus lost to Catholicism was soon regained. But the effect of the loss in weakening the idea of Christian unity and universality was enduring. The concept of the Church was largely supplanted by the concept of the Churches. The Papal Chair forfeited—and never recovered—its international influence. How could that influence be recovered when the old public order of Christendom, which was the essential condition of its exercise, had passed away? When half Europe was withdrawn from the obedience of the Roman Pontiff, and the other half was ruled by absolute monarchs, who repelled every interference with their prerogative, and who gradually possessed themselves of a great

number of ecclesiastical rights and privileges?* More, one effect of the Reformation was to clothe the Papacy with a specially Italian character. Since the Reformation no member of any other nationality has filled it, and the Italian element has largely preponderated in the Church. This was conspicuously seen, even at the Council of Trent. The gain to the cause of Catholicism from the labours of that venerable synod was great; it would undoubtedly have been far greater if the august assembly had been as œcumenical in its composition as in its authority. Again, the inevitable effect of the Protestant revolt was to throw the Catholic Church into a defensive attitude. From the necessity of the case it became reactionary. It viewed with suspicion every departure from the old ways, in science and literature, every advance on medieval thought. A familiar example of this spirit is afforded by the affair of Galileo. It is hard to see how, placed as they were, the ecclesiastical authorities could have acted otherwise than they did in respect of that illustrious man, who may be taken to have made an end of the old cosmogony, with which popular theological conceptions were so

* Card. Hergenröther gives a long list of concessions made by the Church to various monarchs. "The Civil Power," he observes, "had acquired a *de facto* supremacy over her: and, to avoid worse evils, she was compelled, as far as she could, to yield to the menacing demands of princes."—*Katholishe Kirche und Christlicher Staat*, Essay I. p. 2, § 6.

closely bound up. It is certain that in the event—and no very remote event—the effect of their action was to fix upon the Church the reproach of obscurantism: of aversion from the intellectual progress of the world. "The starry Galileo and his woes" have been, for two centuries, a commonplace, and a very effective one, of anti-Catholic disputants. The famous "E pur si muove" is now relegated to the domain of legend. But it is one of those legends that are truer than most facts. The man was silenced. And, as was said at the time, "the Church triumphed." Such triumphs are pyrrhic victories, disastrous, in the long run, to the conquerors.

But the results of Protestantism on the Catholic Church were not wholly disastrous. It was a stern monition, and an effectual one, that her long deferred reform must be delayed no longer. The Council of Trent has been called the greatest work effected by Luther. It is not easy to overestimate the salutary fruits of the Council's labours. It suppressed scandals, purified ecclesiastical life, defined Christian dogmas in general, and, in particular, put forward a luminous and cogent confutation of Luther's antinomianism: it vindicated the constitution of the Church and the prerogatives of the Papacy. A very common complaint against it is that it sacrificed the future to the present. The sufficient answer is that its members did not possess the power attributed to the Buddhist sage.

of calling to mind the events of forty ages that had passed and of forty ages to come. They did their work in their day, and, primarily, for their day. And the event abundantly shows their success. In the fifty years which immediately followed the close of the Council of Trent, Catholicism regained nearly all it had lost in France, in the Low Countries, in Bavaria, in Bohemia, in Austria, in Hungary, and in Poland.

The great instrument of its triumph was the Society of Jesus, which received pontifical sanction in the year 1540-1543. The Jesuits took up the work of teaching and preaching which had fallen from the hands of the Franciscans and Dominicans at the close of the Middle Ages, and did it in a way congruous with the spirit of the new age. "To fight against heresies and vice under the standard of Christ" was the work, Ignatius told his companions, to which they were called. And it is matter of history with what success they accomplished it. Their unquenchable zeal, their unlimited self-sacrifice, their unassailable sanctity, are admitted on all hands. They were especially happy in the opportunity which the condition of Protestantism, particularly in Germany, offered for their mission. The dissolvent principle which is of the essence of Luther's doctrine had abundantly manifested itself in sterile strifes and rivalries of hate between disputing theologians, and in the decay of the

moralities essential to the maintenance of civilised life. As Mr. Gardiner well puts it, "In the face of a divided people, of self-seeking princes, and of conflicting theories, the Jesuits" "stepped forward to bid silence in the name of the renovated Papal Church, alone, as they urged, able to give peace instead of strife, certainty instead of disputation." They "made their way. Step by step the Catholic reaction gained ground."* The ground which it gained, it never again lost. But it was arrested by the Thirty Years War. To dwell upon that internecine conflict would be beside my present purpose. I will merely observe first that in the quarrel which was its proximate cause, the Catholics were, beyond doubt, formally in the right. The question was simply this: Whether the claim of Protestant potentates could be admitted to hold Catholic bishopries, and to secularize the lands of the Catholic Church within their territories. The claim was monstrous, on the face of it, and was in flat contradiction to the provisions of the Peace of Augsburg. Even Mr. Gardiner, whose sympathies are not usually with the Catholics, does not defend it. He allows that "the whole thing had an ugly look." † I observe, secondly, that the Peace of Westphalia, by which the war was brought to an end, really established

* *The Thirty Years War*, p. 13.
† *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the principle "Cujus est regio illius est religio," than which no more direct negation of the Claims of Christianity, no more fragrant violation of the rights of conscience on which Christianity is founded, can be imagined. It riveted the authority of the prince over the religion of the subject. It sealed the spiritual slavery of half the German people. It made of them, as Gförer has observed, "ein Bedientenvolk," a nation of servants, with no rule of right and wrong but their master's pleasure, until Kant rediscovered for them the moral law, and proclaimed the categorical imperative of Duty. It was congruous, it was necessary that the Pope should protest against the Peace of Westphalia. He would have been false to his office if he had failed to protest. For "the championship of the moral law and conscience is his *raison d'être*." *

Unfortunately the Church did not confine herself to spiritual weapons for her vindication against the Protestant Reformation. On the 21st of July, 1542, Paul III. established by Bull "the Supreme Tribunal of the Inquisition, universal in its jurisdiction," and having for its object "to suppress and uproot the errors that have found place in the Christian community." Judging with the wisdom so easy of attainment after the event, we must surely say that this recourse to the secular

* Cardinal Newman's *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 67.

arm was a monstrous blunder, destined, in after times, to injure most disastrously the cause it was intended to serve. But to blame the men of that age for not seeing with our eyes, is, in the last degree, unphilosophical. The doctrine of toleration, as we now account of it, was strange to them. We find it stated, indeed, in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.* But that wise and good man—surely among the wisest and the best that the world has ever known—by no means supposed that his philosophic speculation could be carried out in practice. On the contrary, the spectacle of the actual fruits of Protestantism on the Continent led him to advocate stringent measures for the repression of heresy in England.† I need not

* Erasmus also glances at it in his *Praise of Folly*. "I"—it is Folly who speaks—"was lately at a theological disputation, as, indeed, I frequently am. Some one there proposed the question what scriptural authority there was for overcoming heretics by means of the stake, instead of persuading them by argument. A certain severe old gentleman, whose frown proclaimed him a theologian, answered, much in wrath, that St. Paul had given authority for the practice when he wrote: 'Hæreticum hominem, post unam et alteram correptionem, devita.' And after shouting out the words again, while many present were wondering what was the matter with him, he at last explained, 'de vita tollendum hæreticum.' Some laughed: but there were not wanting those to whom this comment seemed entirely theological." The old gentleman offered another proof of the syllogistic kind. "Scriptum est maleficum ne patieris vivere. Omnis hæreticus maleficus. Ergo, &c."

† But it would seem that none were condemned to death by him for their religious opinions. See Nisard's *Renaissance et Réforme*, vol. ii. § 8.

say that the various communions professing the new religion persecuted dissidents with a severity rivalling that employed in defence of the old. English Protestantism racked, hung, cut down alive, and ripped open any Jesuits, seminary priests, or laity loyal to the ancient faith, on whom it could lay its hands, and Puritans received from it hardly less rigorous treatment. In Protestant Geneva, the stake awaited any who offered to believe otherwise than Calvin. The executioner's axe was red, throughout Protestant Germany, with the blood of those who differed from the opinions of Luther. Religious persecution has been called "the deadly original sin of the Reformed Churches." Assuredly Protestants were less excusable than Catholics in resorting to it, because they used it to punish others for maintaining that very principle of private judgment on which Protestantism was founded. All which must ever be borne in mind in dealing with this subject. Still, if there is any one lesson written more clearly than another upon the annals of Europe, it is the inexpediency, in the long run, of attempting to repress, by penal legislation, religious beliefs and practices, save such as are manifestedly subversive of civilised society. Even the most enthusiastic Inquisitors, who accompanied Giordano Bruno to the Campo dei Fiori on that bright February morning of 1600, would probably have desired to turn back the ghastly procession, if they could have foreseen how, in less than three

centuries, the image of the martyr of pantheistic idealism would be reared, amid tumult of acclaim, upon the site of his stake, and his doctrines taught from the philosophic chairs of well-nigh every Italian university.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW AGE.

Half a century ago Mill wrote, "It must be the shallowest view of the French Revolution which can now consider it as anything but a mere incident in man himself, in his beliefs, in his principles of conduct, and, therefore, in the outward arrangements of society—a change so far from being completed that it is not clear, even to the more advanced spirits, to what goal it is tending."* Perhaps the time has at length arrived when the nature of the change has become clearer, and its goal more distinct. One thing is certain: the Revolution has swept away from France, and from the countries into which it penetrated—and where has it not penetrated?—the vestiges of the old mediæval order which lingered until the end of the eighteenth century. It aspired to remake society upon a new model, and that model was supplied by the speculations of Rousseau.

* *Dissert. and Discus.*, vol. i. p. 57.

The two primary postulates of Rousseau's doctrine are the natural goodness of man, and the absolute sovereignty of the individual. They are postulates which are directly opposed to the Claims of Christianity both as an idea and as a phenomenon. Christianity, as a religion, rests upon the fact that there is within us what Kant called "a radical evil": a fault, a taint, a vice of nature. And it claims to being a remedy for this innate evil, and for the evils that spring therefrom: "to treat universally and to heal," as St. Cyril wrote, in the words quoted in the First Chapter, "every species of sins that are committed by soul and body." Again, Christianity, as a Church, claims an allegiance quite incompatible with the existence of absolute sovereignty, either in the one or in the many. For absolute sovereignty belongs only to perfection: and "there is none good save One, that is God." To Him alone, the High and Holy One, that inhabiteth Eternity, is the kingdom and the supremacy over all: whose will is perfect reason, perfect truth, perfect justice. And conscience is His "Aboriginal Vicar" and perpetual, indefeasible representative upon earth, under whose law every man is born. The special characteristic of our ideas of reason, truth, justice, is that their sway is absolute. The "ought" which commands us to follow reason, to speak truth, to do justice, is not limited in its authority, because it is divine in its character. An

essential part of the mission of Christianity, as I have insisted throughout this volume, is to vindicate this prerogative of conscience: to maintain that into its sacred sphere secular sovereignty may not intrude. It was precisely through faithfulness to this part of its mission, that Christianity was originally brought into conflict with the Revolution.

Let us consider it a little. The sovereignty of the individual is the corner stone on which the revolutionary political edifice is reared. "Sachez-vous," demanded Chalier, "que vous êtes rois, et plus que rois? Ne sentez-vous pas la souveraineté qui circule dans vos veines"? Rousseau conceives of civil society as the result of a contract between these sovereign units, whence results, in the public order, the collective sovereignty of all. And thus another Jacobin orator, one Isnard: "Le peuple connaît aujourd'hui sa dignité: il sait que d'après la Constitution le dévise de tout Français doît être celle-ci, vivre libre, l'égal de tous, et membre du souverain." Rousseau himself reduces all the clauses of his Social Contract to this one, as its quintessence and elixir: "Chacun de nous met en commune sa personne et toute sa puissance sous la suprême direction de le volonté générale." Thus the State is armed with limitless power. True it is that, in the Jacobin theory, this power is exercised by an elective assembly. But despotism is despotism, whether the despot be one

man or a roomfull of men. The Roman Emperor claimed his irresponsible dictatorship as the chosen representative of the people.* The members of the Jacobin Sovereign Assembly claim theirs on exactly the same ground.

Are we told that the electors are, after all, the real sovereigns? So they are in theory. Happily, they are not so in practice. A Sovereign Assembly means oppression. A Sovereign mob means anarchy, which is worse. But what I am concerned to point out here is that this theory of the omnipotence—la toute-puissance—of the State necessarily brought it into conflict with the Church. Rousseau expressly complains that the Christian religion broke up the unity of the civil polity: "qui fit que l'état cessa de être un," is his expression. And he claims that it is the office in every country of the sovereign only, to fix both worship and dogma.† The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was the translation into fact of Rousseau's teaching. Its authors protested that they merely called upon the priesthood to obey the law. This was true. But it was a law which violated the ecumenical character of the divine community whereof the clergy were ministers, and reduced the Church to a mere depart-

* "Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem, quum lege regia quæ de ejus imperio lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit."—*Int.* I., tit. 3, 6.

† *Du Contrat Social*, l. iv. c. 8.

ment of the omnipotent state: which tore them from the centre of unity, and made them the officers of the secular power. It was the direct negation of the Claim of Christianity as a universal spiritual kingdom. It was a resuscitation of that Cæsarism which the Church, in her early centuries, encountered and broke in pieces. And it is notable that the new tyranny, like the old, complained of the recalcitrant Christians as "unsociable," for declining to obey the law of the human polity to which they belonged, when it contravened the law of the divine commonwealth of which they were also members.

The political doctrine of Rousseau, then, issues in the same complete subordination of religion to the State which had been the outcome of the Lutheran and the starting point of the Anglican Reformation. And his teaching concerning the unalloyed goodness of human nature illustrates "the falsehood of extremes," as signally as Luther's teaching that there is in man an organ of sin which must act, and whose every act is sin. I suppose this Lutheran dogma, and the cognate dogma of Calvin, are now of little practical influence. But assuredly the spurious individualism which lies at the root of the speculations of both those Reformers, as of Rousseau, has deeply infected modern thought. I take it that the autonomy of the individual reason is now a very widely accepted principle. It is curious that while the ancients regarded this faculty

as an instrument wherewith to subdue the passions, the school of thinkers dominant for the last century view it chiefly as a weapon for combating authority, whether in the political or the intellectual, the ethical or the religious domain. The consequences have been little more than negative. Can we say that there are now throughout Europe—outside of the Catholic Church—any recognised first principles of thought and action in which we may find an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast? Nay, are we not told by teachers in the greatest credit, that there are, in reality, no such first principles for us: that truths absolute, necessary, and eternal—if such there be—are beyond us; that, as all our knowledge is relative, so are all our rules deducible from it?

I remember a gifted Frenchman—himself the freest of freethinkers—describing current philosophical speculation in Europe as a "débris de doctrines surnageant pêle-mêle." I think the description just. Moral guidance there is none in society. Force and chance take the place of generally accepted ethical and religious maxims. This is the necessary consequence of the doctrine of the all-sufficiency of the individual reason: of placing it in the throne which belongs rightly to the abstract reason. Perhaps the greatness of the change which has come over the general mind may best be realised by glancing back to the Ages of Faith. The tendency of the medieval

world was to see all things in God: the tendency of the modern world is to see all things in man. Then the eternal, immutable Creator was recognised as the beginning and final end of the creature; now, there is a widespread school which refuses to look beyond the visible scene, which makes life its own end, which exalts man's mortal, ever-changing self into a present Deity; so that we may say, with a deeper meaning than the words bore upon the lips of the Attic poet, Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δί' ἐξεληλακώς. The apotheosis of the individual, the apotheosis of the State, the apotheosis of the race, are aspects of this humanitarian pantheism which is a vast fact of the present day, traceable clearly in the contemporary literature of every civilised nation under heaven.

Such is the Spirit of the Age: the Zeitgeist with which Christianity is confronted. And here I am reminded of a fine passage of Lamennais, which, though written more than half a century ago, is as true now as it was then.

"Après dix-huit cents ans de combats et de triomphe, le Christianisme éprouve enfin le même sort que son fondateur. Cité, pour ainsi dire, à comparaître non pas devant un proconsul, mais devant le genre humain tout entier, on l'interroge, '*Es-tu roi?* est-il vrai, comme on t'en accuse, que tu prétendes régner sur nous?' '*C'est vous-même qui l'avez dit,*' repondit-il, 'Oui, *je suis roi;* je règne sur les intelligences en les éclair-

ant, sur les cœurs en réglant leurs mouvements et jusqu'à leurs désirs; je règne sur la société par mes bienfaits. Le monde était enseveli dans les ténèbres de l'erreur: *je suis venu lui apporter la vérité*; voilà mon titre; *quiconque aime la vérité m'écoute.*' Mais déjà ce mot n'a plus aucun sens pour une raison pervertie; il est nécessaire qu'on le lui explique: '*Qu'est-ce que la vérité?*' demande le juge distrait et stupide: et sans attendre la réponse, il sort." *

But whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, the reply of Christianity now to the question, What is truth? is essentially what it was at the beginning. Christianity in the nineteenth century, just as in the time of St. Cyril, claims to "teach catholically and without defect all dogmas which ought to come home to the knowledge of all men, whether concerning things visible and invisible, concerning heavenly and earthly things." It claims "to extend throughout all the world, from one end of the earth to the other: and to subject every race to the true religion," "to bring men into a polity in belief of the truth." These are the Claims which Christianity still makes through the Catholic Church, and which it cannot keep from making, without ceasing to be itself. I say "through the Catholic Church," for, in fact, she alone of all bodies of Christians sustains these Claims. I have no wish to disparage—I am, in fact, very far from undervaluing—the labours of Christian communions separate from her. So far as they teach her doctrines, they are fellow-

* *Essai sur l'Indifférence*, Intr. p. 27.

workers together with her. But none of them so much as pretends to her ecumenical attributes. It was remarked a century ago by South that the Church of England alone made Protestantism considerable in Europe. Surely it is a patent fact of the present day that the Catholic Church alone makes Christianity considerable in the world. She alone judges the world in the exercise of her prophetical office. Cardinal Newman, in his *Grammar of Assent* has catalogued, with his inimitable skill and singular fairness, the opinions which specially characterize modern civilization. They are these—

That "moral evil and physical" are "nothing more than imperfections of a parallel nature;" that "the difference in gravity between the two is one of degree only, not of kind; that moral evil is merely the offspring of physical, and that as we remove the latter, so we inevitably remove the former; that there is a progress of the human race which tends to the annihilation of moral evil; that knowledge is virtue, and vice is ignorance; that sin is a bugbear, not a reality; that the Creator does not punish except in the sense of correcting; that vengeance in Him would of necessity be vindictiveness; that all that we know of Him, be it much or little, is through the laws of nature; that miracles are impossible; that prayer to Him is a superstition; that the fear of Him is unmanly; that sorrow for sin is slavish and abject; that the only intelligible worship of Him is to act well our part in the world, and the only sensible repentance to do better in future; that if we do our duties in this life, we may take our chance for the next; and that it is of no use perplexing our minds about the future state, for it is all a matter of guess." *

* *Grammar of Assent*, p. 416 (Fifth Edition).

These are the opinions which are presented to us every day, in a thousand forms, as the outcome of Modern Civilization, Liberalism, and Progress. The late Pope included the proposition that he ought to come to terms with and reconcile himself to them, in that much abused and little understood document, the Syllabus or List of Errors condemned by him from time to time. How could he possibly have done otherwise? Is it not the duty of the Church to testify to the world against such teaching? teaching which strikes at the heart of Christianity. Again, in his Encyclical Letter, accompanying this List, he reprobated the principle "that the best constitution of the State and civil progress require human society to be constituted and governed without regard to religion." Well, I know not of one considerable writer on politics who would not have agreed with Pius IX. here, from the time of Plato, who, in his *Laws*, tells us that a community founded on faith in unseen and supersensuous realities is the true type of society, to the time of Mr. Gladstone, who, in his treatise on *Church and State*, denounces as "practical atheism" the claim of "masses invested with political power . . . . to banish themselves from the Divine protection and regard."

But "a fact is not altered by a hundred texts." Whatever the ideally best constitution of society may be, it is indisputable that the spirit of the age aims everywhere at constituting the com-

monwealth without regard to religion. Formerly, the alliance of the Catholic Church and the Christian State was regarded as a condition and pledge of the stability of governments, nay, of the coherence of civil polity. In these days it is put aside as an outworn arrangement, prejudicial to human liberty and to the welfare of society. Now there can be no question that in the three hundred years preceding the French Revolution this alliance, in every country where it prevailed, had become, more and more, an instrument for the oppression and enslavement of the spiritual order. For my own part, I consider the position of the Catholic Church, as the last century drew to its close, more abject and degraded than at any previous period in her history. The French Revolution, little as its leaders intended this, was, in the event, as regards the Catholic Church, an emancipation. And the legitimate outcome of the principle of the incompetence of the State in the matter of cults, is to restore to her the plenitude of her sovereignty in her own domain. But in the exercise of that sovereignty it is almost inevitable that she should come into contact, and into conflict, with the civil power. The Church and the State are polities, existing side by side, for different ends, and exercising sovereignty over the same subjects. The ends of the State are properly secular: such as the peace and order of society: the development and increase of national resources: the diffusion

and enhancement of material comfort. But besides these ends—these legitimate ends—of mankind, there are others after which many men aspire not less, but more eagerly. "Sors tua mortalis, non est mortale quod optas." Men have spiritual as well as material, immortal as well as temporal ends. And it is for these spiritual and immortal ends that the Catholic Church exists. It sets out with the view that

> "Life is probation, and this earth no goal
> But starting point of man:"

a view of human existence quite different from the State's. It has been founded, I say, for ends transcending the ends of civil polity: it proceeds on principles diverse from those of the secular society: and therefore its laws breathe another spirit. Again, it is universal, whereas the State is municipal, and it cannot conform its doctrines and discipline to national demands.

This being so, conflict between it and the State is occasionally unavoidable. To give two familiar instances. The State accounts of marriage as a civil contract, and claims to regulate its inception and dissolution. The Catholic Church regards it as a sacramental state of life, indissoluble, if once rightly entered upon, save by the death of husband or wife. Again, the State insists upon the education of children in view of their becoming useful members of the community. But the Church has her own

view of the religious constitution of the family. She holds that to bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" is a sacred duty binding upon parents — a duty which she alone can enable them adequately to perform. It is often said that the Catholic Church claims to disobey the laws of any country at her pleasure. This is not so. Obedience to the powers that be, as divinely ordained, is a first principle with the Catholic Church. She knows nothing of any "sacred right of insurrection." Except in grave cases, carefully specified by her theologians, she condemns rebellion as a sin. It is only when the law of the State comes into conflict with the higher law of conscience, that disobedience to it becomes a duty. And of such conflict she claims, and cannot but claim, herself to be judge. I am far from denying that her rulers have in this matter sometimes judged wrongly, that they have overstepped the true bounds of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. I am merely stating the principle. It will be seen, then, that the formula of a free Church in a free State, so lauded in the present day—and not without grounds—by no means promises unbroken harmony between the two. It must be remembered again—what is too often forgotten—that the State is not a machine dealing with dead matter. It is an organisation of living men, in many of whom the hopes and the fears with which religion is concerned, supply the mightiest and most masterful

motives of their lives. The security and order of the State are the conditions of civilized life. It is manifest—all history teaches the lesson—that religion, more than anything else, makes for or against that security and order. It is the greatest instrument of union or division. It may be either peace or a sword.

But the matter is further complicated. We are sometimes told that if the State is not Christian, it need not be anti-Christian: that there is what is called "the Theism of the Natural Order" to save it from blank Materialism; that recognizing in man something more than matter in motion, it may leave him to seek his highest good in his own way, no more interfering with his religion, and with the liberties which his religion involves, than with his choice of literature or his fashion of dress; and maintaining an attitude of benevolent neutrality to all forms of faith. It is a comfortable doctrine; but it is far from being the practice, or indeed the theory, of the New Liberalism, which decrees injustice as a law, and seeks to impose upon peoples, through a compulsory system of primary education, and otherwise, the irreligion of the State. We must recognise the fact that the anti-Christian sectaries of Europe are largely animated by fanaticism.

> "It is a lie—their priests, their Pope,
> Their saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
> Are lies."

That is their firm conviction about the Church, and the source of their hatred to her. There can be no doubt of their sincerity, in a vast number of cases. Like the late Professor Clifford they regard Christianity as "that awful plague which has destroyed two civilizations and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men."*

Such are the actual conditions of modern life in which the Church has to fulfil her mission. She has to maintain the Claims of Christianity in an age when Christianity is widely impugned as an idea, and hated as a phenomenon. What are the prospects before her in fulfilling that mission? That question may be met by another. Can the world do without Christianity? Human nature is ever essentially the same. And the spiritual needs of human nature are precisely what they were when Christianity was introduced into the world. There are those who maintain that physical science can supply these needs: that it is sufficient in the intellectual and ideal as in the material and industrial order: that the time is gone by for the dreams of metaphysics and theology: that sensible experience, and the verification of the phenomena of sensible experience, will yield the

* *Lectures and Essays*, vol. i. p. 253.

life philosophy of the future. A curious comment upon this view is supplied by the fact that Spiritualism or Dæmonism finds among the votaries of physical science its most eminent recruits, as the names of Messrs. Wallace, Crookes, and Varley may suffice to show. There are said to be 10,000,000 Spiritualists in the United States; and Mr. Bryce has not failed to note "the tendency of this shrewd and educated people to relapse into the oldest and most childish form of superstition." * Yes: man's need of religion is abiding and *will* find satisfaction. We have but to look around the world to discover everywhere abundant evidence of that fact. It is a fact which warrants the First Napoleon's dictum that religion is the true vaccine of superstition.

And here I would note a mistake into which the late M. Renan, with all his cleverness, fell. He made of religion a mere poetic aspiration, a mere conception of the ideal. But religion is not that. It holds and must hold of the supernatural. Now the supernatural is one thing. The poetical, the ideal is another. And belief in the supernatural is an ineradicable element of our nature. It is no mere play of the fancy: it is no mere conception of the intellect. It is rather like the expectation of something which we instinctively know to exist, but which has not been manifested: something far

* *The American Commonwealth*, vol. iii. p. 639.

off but ever nigh, in search of which we are imperiously driven by the inability of human life to satisfy human aspirations. For who that contemplates life as it really is, and always must be, can help arriving at conclusions tinged with Pessimism? Modern thought has not changed, and cannot change, its essential conditions. Consider the part which error, ignorance, folly, crime, vice, disease, and death play, and always will play, in it. True, on the other hand must be set off health, wisdom, love, and virtue. But certainly, for the vast majority of us, passions and pain are the most conspicuous facts of our sojourning here. As certain is it that Christianity supremely corresponds with these stern realities, and brings the antidote to them. Suffering is the fundamental idea of Christianity—"the religion of sorrow"—and the supreme act of Christian worship, the Sacrifice of the Mass, is the liturgical expression of that idea. "Croyez-moi," says the Abbé Taconet, in Bourget's powerful novel, as he points to the Crucifix, "Croyez-moi que personne n'en dira plus que celui-là sur la souffrance et sur les passions, et vous ne trouverez pas le remède ailleurs."

It is this supernatural principle, alone sufficient for the healing of the nations, that the Catholic Church represents in its most precise and concrete form. And if—as I believe—her teaching is impregnable whether by metaphysical or physical science, that teaching, as it appears to me, has the promise of

the future. I do not see how any adequate life philosophy can be framed apart from the great spiritual truths that she maintains: truths founded, as I hold, in the Eternal Consciousness of which Christ is the image to mankind: truths which supremely enforce and illuminate the moral significance of life, so greatly obscured in an age when material civilization dominates ethical civilization, and interests triumph over principles. Professor Huxley in a passage which is not without pathos, observes, "I have been seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up."* I well understand Mr. Huxley's perplexity, and I deeply sympathize with it. For myself I feel very sure that the religious feeling, the importance of which he rightly estimates, will not be kept up by secularism, by selfishness, or even by "science." It will be kept up by Christianity alone, the depositary and dispenser of the great ethical and spiritual traditions from which the higher life of the European nations has sprung, and with which that life is indissolubly bound.

So much concerning the prospects of Christianity as an idea. But we do not live in a world of mere ideas. We live in a world of phenomena. And one of the vastest of those phenomena is Christianity as represented by the Catholic Church. What then

* *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 51.

are the prospects of the Catholic Church in this new age? Well, it seems to me that every year which passes over us, brings out more and more clearly the essential need of a universal spiritual polity, such as the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church alone, presents. The tendency everywhere is to strengthen the State against the individual. This is a theme on which Mill uttered many words of warning in his interesting book on Liberty. And before Mr. Spencer there has arisen the vision of an impending "socialistic administration," "a régime of status," "a revival of despotism," with "the mass of the people controlled by grades of officials." * The tendency is differently manifested in different countries: in one way in England, in another in France, in a third in Germany. But, unquestionably, throughout the civilized world, the State is becoming more meddlesome, more inquisitorial, and is ever extending its domain. I by no means affirm that this is an unmixed evil. It is, to some extent, a reaction against a spurious individualism which was fast obliterating the true conception of the social organism.

But all reactions are apt to be carried too far. And where, except in the Catholic Church, is there an organised spiritual polity which can stand forth as the champion of the rights of conscience, of the liberty of the spiritual order against

* *The Man versus the State*, p. 42

the overweening power of the dechristianised State? The Greek Church is in abject subjection to the Sultan in Turkey, to the Czar in Russia. Since the martyrdom of Nicon no stirrings of independent life have been visible in it. The Evangelical Church of Prussia is the creation of King Frederick William III., who, in 1817, formed it out of the Lutheran and Calvinistic Communions hitherto existing side by side in his territories, and endowed it with formularies of his own composition, but left it without a definite creed. The other Protestant Churches in Germany have a like origin, and are in a like condition. Assuredly not one of them would venture to question the dictates of the Government in matters of religion. How should they, when "a breath can make them, as a breath has made"? The Anglican Establishment, no doubt, occupies a worthier and more dignified position than any other Communion which issued from the Reformation. This is due to two causes. In the first place, the Church of England has preserved the episcopal form of government, and thereby has, to some extent, retained an organic character. Again, Henry VIII. was a far better instructed theologian than Luther or Calvin. And although Anglicanism, to its great loss, has departed largely from the doctrinal standard prescribed by that prince, it has yet in the event preserved a larger amount of Catholic teaching than any other of the "reformed" confessions.

But the Catholic Church alone possesses the note of universality, she alone is endowed with the independence of a spiritual empire, extending throughout the kingdoms of this world, but subject to none of them. The other Christian communities that have separated from her, however venerable for their antiquity, however illustrious for their zeal in good works, for the intelligence and piety of their clergy, for their missionary activity at home and abroad, do not so much as claim to be more, at the most, than local or national institutions. They are what the canonists call *collegia*, "bodies politic or societies, within the civil communities in which they are found, and therefore of a municipal character." And being such, they can be effectively dealt with by municipal law. But the Catholic Church is constituted in the form of an universal spiritual monarchy; her episcopate now, as in the time of St. Cyprian, "one through the see of Peter."* And it is precisely this characteristic which renders her an effective check on the usurpations of the State in the domain of conscience. Recent history supplies an instance which admirably illustrates what I am writing. What communion but the Catholic could have successfully resisted the whole power of the Prussian monarchy, wielded by a statesman of the energy and determination of Prince von Bismarck?

* *De Utilitate Credendi*, § 3.

The knowledge that they were members of a world-wide spiritual empire, the consciousness of the sympathies of their brethren in all lands, the material help * which poured in upon them from many nations, upheld the hands and strengthened the hearts of the Catholics of Germany through the great tribulation of the *Kulturkampf* from which they at last victoriously issued. Prince von Bismarck in entering upon that ignoble persecution made one great mistake. He judged Catholic bishops and priests by the standard of Protestant court chaplains. He forgot that Catholic populations were not accustomed, like Protestants, to take their religion from the State. He forgot the œcumenical character of the spiritual polity which he attacked: its hierarchy an organic whole through the Papacy—the *Sacramentum Unitatis:* its subjects prepared to resist, at any sacrifice, the demand that they should render unto Cæsar the things that are God's. He utterly failed in detaching the German Catholic clergy from the Pope, or the German Catholic people from their clergy. Not a single chapter would fill the place of a deposed

* I happened to be one of the trustees of a fund which sent to their help from this country between £7,000 and £8,000: a large sum when the extreme poverty of the great majority of Catholics in England is borne in mind. And I have before me, as I write, letters from German Bishops, fully warranting what I have said above as to the moral effect on their flocks of this manifestation of our admiration for, and sympathy with them, in their hard struggle for the rights of conscience.

bishop: not a single parish would avail itself of the power given by the Falk laws to elect a new pastor in the place of its imprisoned or exiled priest.

It appears to me, then, that in this New Age the office of the Catholic Church in vindicating the rights of conscience, the prerogatives of the spiritual order, the immunities of the City of God, will be of even more importance to mankind than in the Primitive and Medieval Ages. But we must remember that it is emphatically a New Age.

> "Das Alte stürzt, es ändert sich die Zeit,
> Und neues Leben blüht aus den Ruinen."

This is true both politically and intellectually. The magnitude of the changes wrought in the public and social order of the civilized world during the last two generations has been immense. And who can doubt that they are the prelude to vaster transformations soon to come? Forty years ago Gioberti, in his last book,* prophesied of the European *rinnovamento* which he saw approaching. It would consist, he thought, in the triumph of three ideas, in the satisfaction of three aspirations, held down and stifled since the Treaty of Vienna:

* *Del Rinnovamento civile d'Italia.*

the re-establishment of intellect in its natural supremacy (*maggioranza del pensiero*), the reconstitution of nationalities, and the redemption (*redenzione*) of the masses, by a juster distribution of property, by the recognition of every man's right to live by his labour, and by the diffusion of popular education. Time has largely justified these vaticinations. Everywhere the forms of the old order are disappearing. And whatever shapes Democracy may assume, one thing is certain, that it means the universal empire of public opinion. One of the wisest and most illustrious prelates that have adorned the Catholic Church in this century wrote in 1861: "The entirely altered circumstances of the times necessarily require a completely different ordering of the relations between Church and State. This is the object after which the present age is striving; from the time of the Reformation to the present day we have not succeeded in attaining it. The recollections of the old Catholic unity still survived in men's minds, and they endeavoured in every little State to establish things anew, in accordance with these recollections, without suspicion that the old conditions had disappeared. Hence arose, very often, a truly absurd imitation of medieval relations, and that which, viewed from the point of Catholic unity, had been grand and legitimate, became, in completely changed circumstances, unjustifiable and intolerable. The world may

arrange its relations with the Church once more in mediæval fashion, if, through the mercy of God, it returns once more to the unity of religious conviction. Till that time another foundation is necessary."* That foundation can nowhere be found save in the establishment of religious freedom in the amplest sense: in the complete independence of the spiritual order.

It is notable how the ecclesiastical policy of the late Pontiff has proved successful exactly in proportion as it recognised this fact. His measures for the consolidation and advancement of the Church in England, in Holland, in the United States, in virtue of the religious liberty prevailing in these countries, have been, and are still, full of good fruits. The Concordats concluded by him with certain States after the events of 1848—with Tuscany, Spain, Austria for example—are long dead: nay, to speak more accurately, they never were alive. The ancient régime has vanished in the ecclesiastical as in the civil sphere. In the Middle Ages the Church judged the individual. Now the individual judges the Church. Yet the Church still claims a right —she cannot help claiming it, without denying herself—to rule, direct, rebuke, exhort, denounce, condemn. The Civil Power no longer executes her decrees. Their sanctions are in the conscience

* "*Soll die Kirche allein rechtlos sein?*" A Pastoral Letter addressed to the Faithful of the Diocese of Mainz by William Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz.—P. 30.

of her children. It is to public opinion that she appeals: public opinion in its highest and worthiest sense of the public conscience. I believe Vinet—certainly the most considerable writer produced by Continental Protestantism in this century—well founded when, in his *Essay on the Manifestation of Religious Opinions*, he arrives at the conclusion that in these days the ecclesiastical polity should be perfectly independent of the State, and bound to it by no ties of gratitude or fear. I see no prospect that the Catholic Church will again hold the position in Europe which she held in the Middle Ages: that the Pope will once more occupy the great international office assigned him in the canon law. But it is well conceivable that in the New Age, which is even now upon us, the Pontiff's moral influence will be of unparalleled greatness, as from his seat by the tomb of the Apostles he surveys his œcumenical charge, and

> "Listening to the inner flow of things,
> Speaks to the age out of eternity:"

reproving the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: maintaining the divine testimonies before kings and democracies: upholding the rights of conscience and of the moral law, amid the social tyrannies, the national jealousies, the political animosities, which will doubtless be the staple of future history, as they are of past.

But not only have the political conditions of life

changed. The intellectual conditions have changed also. I said just now that I believe the Catholic Church impregnable whether by physical or metaphysical science. If I did not believe that, I should not have set myself to write the present book. Of course I speak of Catholicism as rationally understood. I do not speak of it as understood by Neapolitan lazzaroni or Spanish peasants. But the grave question is, How far has Catholicism responded to the needs of modern thought? What effort has it made towards such response, since the days of—say—Friedrich Schlegel, Chateaubriand, and Lacordaire? I know that there have not been wanting among Catholics men of learning, and even of genius, who have set themselves candidly to deal with, and to answer, the problems specially characteristic of this New Age. But how far have their voices found an echo? Is it not clear that the tone of the great masters of modern literature, through whom those problems have found concrete expression, from Goethe until now, is, on the whole, alien from Catholicism, if not opposed to it? I think I am well warranted in calling this a grave question: a question worthy of being most deeply pondered. To examine and understand is a need of human nature. True is that word of Hellenic wisdom that it is not in our own choice whether we will philosophise or not, for philosophise we must. Pious practices, works of charity, the duties of civil

life are not enough to satisfy men's minds. There are exigencies of thought which must also be satisfied. Nothing is more disheartening than the frivolous, disingenuous treatment of questions ever growing in seriousness, by a certain class of writers—personally, I am sure, most excellent and well-intentioned men. In this department, too, it is necessary to look facts in the face, with open eyes that desire the truth. We cannot tie up modern thought in mediæval formulas. The schoolmen no doubt did their work not for an age but for all time. But they did it in their own day, and according to the methods of their day, and with especial reference to the needs of their day. They did not exhaust the resources of the human intellect, nor speak the last word of human reason. Of many subjects which they treated—for example the relation of the organism to its activities—their treatment is inadequate. And many of the questions which so greatly occupy us—such for instance as those dealt with in Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent*—were extremely remote from their habit of mind. There are more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in their philosophy. Nay, may we not say that, since they wrote, new heavens and a new earth have been revealed to us? And philosophy must expand in order to deal with the fresh problems raised by modern physics and by modern metaphysics. We must cheerfully, nay thankfully, accept all verities that the newer

schools of philosophy have to teach us about the intellectual constitution of man: all facts that the masters of physical science, who have arisen in these latter days, have to teach us concerning the physical universe—of which man forms part on one side of his being—with its illimitable and subtle modifications. Leibnitz has described as the criterion of a true philosophy, that it should at once collect and collate the fragments of truth scattered through systems the most incongruous. To rear such a philosophical edifice is the great architectonic work in the order of thought, which lies before us. In this domain too, doubtless, the Catholic Church will make good the Claim of Christianity in the New Age.

"Anima viva
Partiti di cotesti che sono morti."

INDEX.

PAGE

Æneas Silvius, on the position of Pope and Emperor in 1454 147
Alexander VI., Pope, Bishop Creighton on . . 162
Alfred, King, on treason 130
Ameer Ali, Syed, on Islām 35-86
Amiel, on a certain tendency of human nature . 58
Arnold, Dr., on the massacres of King David . . 65
on a Christian society 129
Augustine, St., on the Civitas Dei 4
on the moral law and its apprehension . . 70

Beaumanoir, on diversity of feudal customs . . 101
Beccadelli, his *Hermaphroditus* 159
Bernard, St., on the prerogatives of the Pope . . 114
Biot, on erroneous comparisons between medieval and modern times 101
Blackstone, on the killing of an outlaw . . . 67
on punishments and crimes 132
Blunt, Professor, a curious statement of . . . 204
Boccacio, his intellectual position 146, 163
Boniface VIII., the decadence of the Papacy begins with 138
Brentano, Dr., on medieval Gilds 124, 127
Brewer, Professor, on the Religious Orders at the beginning of the sixteenth century . . 183
on the preaching of indulgences . . . 190
on the popular historians of the Anglican Reformation 200-201
Bruno, Giordano 216

PAGE

Bryce, Mr., on the medieval Church . . . 112
Buddha, the, legend of 8-24
Buddhism, its statistics 4
considered as a religion is moribund . . 6
its Gospel 8-24
parallelisms between it and Christianity considered 24-36

Carlyle, on the use of the sword by Christianity . 55
on Götz von Berlichingen 93
on the burning of Leo X.'s Bull by Luther . 191
Casuistry, use and abuse of 172
Christendom, idea expressed by the word . . 103, 111
growth and decay of 104-106
position of the Pope in 113-119
civil and domestic life in 117-125
art in 125
spirit of the family in 126-130
intolerance in 130-133
wickedness in 133-134
decline and fall of 136-147
Christianity, is both a religion and a Church . . 2
the assertion that it is plagiarised from Buddhism examined 6-36
Islām's rivalry with 37-86
gift of fascination in 80
is the richest of religions 82
is based on the claims and prerogatives of conscience 88
its alliance with the medieval State . . . 103-135
effect of Humanism on 161-166
effect of Protestant Reformation on . . . 192-214
and Rousseau's doctrine 219-224
its position in the nineteenth century . . 224-246
Chrysostom, St., on the Christian people . . . 3, 88
Church, Dean, on the medieval papacy . . . 114, 115
on Montaigne 165
on the *Provincial Letters* 173
Church, the Anglican, and the Royal Supremacy . 204-206
in the last century 224

PAGE

Church, the Anglican—*continued.*
its superiority to the other Reformed Communions 237
Church, the Catholic, why so called . . . 1
allied with the Christian State 87-134
in the fourteenth century 137-139, 144
in the fifteenth century 140
and the Inquisition 142, 214
and the Renaissance . . . 148, 150-153, 161-164
and the Jesuits 166, 212
and the Protestant Reformation . . . 206-212
and the French Revolution 219-222
in the nineteenth century 225-246
Church, the Evangelical, of Prussia . . . 237
Cicero, on the source of Rome's greatness . . 107
Clement V. impairs the moral influence of the Papacy 139
Coleridge, on Dante. 145
Communal movement in the Middle Ages . . 122
Cranmer, Archbishop, true character of . . . 202
on the power of princes to confer Holy Orders . 205
Creighton, Bishop, on the Fall of Constantinople . 147
on Pope Alexander VI. 162
Crime, conception of, in the Middle Ages . . 131-132
Cyprian, St., on the unity of the Episcopate . . 238
Cyril of Jerusalem, St., on the Claims of Christianity 1

Dante, his work for the Italian language . . 145
his intellectual position 145
Davids, Mr. Rhys, on the documents of Primitive Buddhism 27-29
on the parallelisms between Buddhism and Christianity 34-36
Defensio Pacis, the, a significant sign of the fourteenth century 139
Desiderius, on St. Leo IX. 105
Digby, unhistorical character of his *Mores Catholici* 102
Divine Right of Kings, Protestant doctrine of . . 209
Döllinger, Dr. von, on the origin of the Great Schism 140

PAGE

Döllinger, Dr. von—*continued.*
curious statement of, regarding the Lutheran Reformation 188
on the outcome of the Lutheran doctrines . 198
Donatists, the, their schism 207

Education, different views of Church and State concerning 229
Erasmus, his account of a Good Friday sermon in the Papal Chapel 163
the chief representative of the Renaissance in its best aspects 181
a preacher of rational godliness 182
his visit to Italy 183
his *Praise of Folly* 184
and Luther 186-187
largely checks the progress of the Protestant Reformation 188
on the abuses of indulgences 190
on Luther's doctrine of justification . . 192
the founder of modern critical exegesis . . 197
foretells the issue of the Lutheran movement . 208
on the persecution of heretics 215

Fatalism, in the proper sense, has no place in Mohammed's teaching 79
real 80
Feudal system, the, and the Catholic Church . . 120
Filelfo, his character 157
his canon 160
Foxe the martyrologist, his character . . . 200
Freedom, different meanings of the word . . 157
Freeman, Mr., his view of Mohammed . 42, 54, 55, 58, 63, 75
Furnivall, Mr., on fourteenth-century Catholicism . 98

Galileo, affair of 210
Gerbet, Mgr., on the spiritual reconstruction of the human race 127
on the unifying tendency of Catholicism . . 128

PAGE
Gförer, on the Peace of Westphalia. . . . 214
Gibbon, on the Nestorians 33
his view of Mohammed 41, 61, 71, 72
Giesebrecht, on the study of the classics in the Middle Ages 144
Gioberti, his prophecy of the European *rinnovamento* 240
Gladstone, Mr., on the Atheistic state . . . 227
Goethe, on Christianity and the personality of Christ 8
influence of his *Götz von Berlichingen* . . 93
on the characteristic virtue of the Germans . 192
Gray, his admiration for the Middle Ages . . 91
his delight in Froissart 92
on medieval satirists 99
Greek Church, the 207, 237
Green, J. R., an erroneous generalization of . . 97
Gregorovius, on Pope Nicholas V. 152
Gregory VII., St., his work 105
on the concord of Church and State . . . 129
Guizot, on the Feudal system 104
on the religious unity of the Middle Ages . 110
on the pacific influence of the medieval Church 118

Hallam, work done by, in connection with medieval history 95-96, 103
vicious generalization in 99
Hemans, Mr. Charles, on the Italian Middle Ages . 122
Henry VIII., The *Book of Homilies* on . . . 199
Lord Macaulay on 202
his motives in separating from the Holy See . 203
his Supreme Headship 203-205
his theological attainments 237
Hergenröther, Cardinal, on concessions made by the Church to various monarchs 210
Holy Roman Empire, the, idea of 104, 129
Humanism, what it really was. 153-161
Hume, on the intolerance of Christianity . . 2
Huxley, Professor, a serious perplexity of . . 235

PAGE

Ignatius Loyola, St., his complaint of the writings of Erasmus 182
Indulgences, abuses attending the preaching of . 189-191
Intolerance, medieval 130-133
in the sixteenth century 215
Erasmus on 215
Islām, not a decadent faith 37
is true to its dominant idea 37
the greatness of its missionary work . . 37
once a formidable rival to Christianity in Europe 38
changed views concerning 41
Syed Ameer Ali's apology for 43-86
precursors of 45
first martyrs of 50
growth of 52
democratic character of 71
Gibbon on the faith of 71
substance of 77-80
compared with Christianity 80-82
position of the family in 84
the ineffaceable blot on 85
the essential defect in the conception whereon it is based 85-86

Jesuits, the, and the Renaissance 166
on education 166-167
their taste 169
their morality 171-175
their doctrine of obedience 175-179
and the Protestant Reformation . . . 212-213
John Damascene, St., on the affair of Zainab . . 58
Jowett, on the heathen religions 108
Julius II., his secularity 162, 183
a Good Friday sermon before 163
Junius, on loyalty 130

Kant, his account of freedom 158
rediscovers for Protestant Germany the moral law 214

PAGE
Ketteler, Bishop von, on Church and State . . 241
Kulturkampf the, significance of 239

Lamennais, on the trial of Christianity . . . 224
Landor, Walter Savage, on Islām 38
on Dante's work for the Italian language . 145
on Boccacio 146
Law, the moral, principles of absolute . . . 68
apprehension of, varies indefinitely . . . 69
obliteration of in Protestant Germany after the Thirty Years War 214
the championship of, the Pope's *raison d'être* . 214, 243
Leibnitz, on the criterion of a true philosophy . 246
Leo X., Carlyle's description of 162
hears Pomponazzi and Niphus dispute . . 164
his spirit 191
his Bull against Luther 191
Liberalism, the New, its anti-Christian character . 231
Lingard, on the pacific influences of the medieval Popes 117
Luther, and Erasmus 186-188
cause of his revolt 187
burns the Papal Bull 191
his character 192
practical outcome of his doctrine of justification 192
and of his doctrine of private judgment . . 193-199
his movement not towards liberty . . . 208

Macaulay, Lord, on collective profession of religion 124
on the Anglican Reformation 202
de Maistre, on the ancient Churches separate from the Holy See 208
Maitland, Dr., on popular knowledge of the Anglican Reformation 200
Mansel, Dean, on absolute morality 68
de Map, Walter, on corruption of the medieval Church 97
Marriage, different views of Church and State concerning 229

PAGE
Martin, M. Henri, errors into which he has fallen . 101
Martin V., Pope, his work 140
Maurice, Frederick Denison, on Islām . . . 86
Mass, the, a liturgical expression of suffering . 234
Mill, John Stuart, on a besetting danger of the student of man and society 100
on Pope Clement V. 138
his definition of the Renaissance . . . 149
on the French Revolution 218
Mohammed, three divisions in his career . . 43
his birth 44
his youth and early manhood 44-48
his assumption of the prophetical office . . 48
progress of his doctrine 50-52
his flight to Medīna 53
net result of his work 53
his way of life 53
Mr. Freeman's indictment of 54
his death 56
no impostor 57
allegation against, of sensuality . . . 58-63
and of cruelty 63 67
his claims as a religious teacher . . . 71 80
defects of his doctrine 81-86
Monophysites, the, their schism 207
Montalembert, on Digby's *Mores Catholici* . . 102
on the true greatness of the Middle Ages . . 122
on the poetry of common life in the Middle Ages 125
More, Sir Thomas, and the Renaissance . . 152, 182, 184
and toleration 215
Morley, Mr. John, on the Jesuits as educators . . 168
Muir, Sir William, on Mohammed . . . 52, 64
Musset, A., on the religious character of medieval art 125

Nestorians, the, their schism 207
Newman, Cardinal, on the parallelisms between Christianity and Buddhism 25, 29-34

PAGE

Newman, Cardinal—*continued.*
on Revelation as an universal gift . . . 73
on Sir Walter Scott's novels 94
on the development of the Papacy . . . 113
on medieval superstition 134
his catalogue of the opinions specially characterizing modern civilization 226
Nicholas V., Pope, his reforming zeal becomes inoperative 141
his main object 152
and the Humanists 161, 163
Nisard, M., on Erasmus 181
on Sir Thomas More. 215

Orders, the Religious, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries 142
at the beginning of the sixteenth century . 183

Pantheism, contemporary 224
Pascal, exaggerations in his *Provincial Letters* . 173
Pastor, Dr., on the obstacles to ecclesiastical reform in the fifteenth century 141
on Boccacio 146
attempts to distinguish between a Christian and a Pagan Renaissance 150, 152
Paul III., Pope, re-establishes the Inquisition . . 214
Peccati obligatio 176-177
Percy's *Reliques* 92
Peter, St., on the corporate character of Christianity 3
Petrarch, a precursor of the Renaissance . . 145
Phillimore, J. G., on the position of the Pope in the canon law 116-117
Philosophy, the scholastic 143, 245
Plato's 150
present condition of in Europe . . . 223
need for its expansion 245
Leibnitz's criterion of a true 246
Pius IX., Pope, his Syllabus 227
his ecclesiastical policy 242

PAGE
Plato, on the public profession of a religion . . 107, 227
long neglect of 159
Pocock, Mr., on the popular historians of the English Reformation 201, 202
Poole, Mr. Lane, on the execution of the Banū-Kuraizha 64
Pope, the, development of his authority . . . 113
rise of his temporal power 113
St. Bernard on his prerogatives . . . 114
his authority in the Middle Ages . . . 115
character assigned to in the Canon Law . . 116
his indirect temporal influence in the Middle Ages 117
his pacific functions in the Middle Ages . . 118
central paternity of 128
decline of his authority in the fourteenth century 137
a splendid figure-head in 1454 147
and Humanism 162
his power conservative and limited . . . 198
his *raison d'etre* 214
his prophetical office 227
his position in the New Age 243
Private judgment, use and misuse of . . . 193-195
Protestantism, inner meaning of 206
calamitous importance of 206
actual effects of on the Catholic Church . . 208-211

Quattrocentisti, the, significance of their work . . 146

Ranke, on decline of Papal authority in the fourteenth century 139
Reformation, the Lutheran 188-199
the Anglican 199-206
Renaissance, the, difficulty of defining . . . 148
a Christian, not discoverable 150-153
aspect of indicated by the word Humanism . 153-166
and the Jesuits 166-179
Renan, a judicious reflection of 62

PAGE

Renan—*continued.*
on Islām and Christianity 80
did not repudiate the name of Christian . . 83
his erroneous conception of religion . . 233
de Renzi, on the idea of Christendom . . . 111
Rousseau, his primary postulates 219
his complaint of the Christian religion . . 221
issue of his doctrine 222
Ruskin, Mr., on medieval art 125

Sanders, on the designation of the Pope as "a foreign power" 114
value of his *De Schismate Anglicano* . . 200
Schoolmen, the, their work 143
its deficiencies 245
Scott, Sir Walter, an effect of his Waverley Novels 93
Sidney, Sir Philip, on the Middle Ages . . . 89
Siena, lesson taught by 122
Smollett, his judgment of York Minster . . . 89
on "the implements of Popish superstition" 90
South, on the Church of England in the last century 226
Spencer, Mr. Herbert, on the tendency of the State to strengthen itself against the individual . 236
"Spiritualism," its prevalence and significance . 233
Sprenger, on the affair of Zainab 59
Syllabus, Pius IX.'s 227
Symonds, Mr. J. A., his account of Humanism examined 153-161
his indictment of the Jesuits examined . . 169-179

Taylor, Bishop Jeremy, on the origin of the duty of civil obedience 126
Templars, the, suppression of 138
Thierry, Auguste, on medieval liberties . . . 123
Thirty Years War, the 213
Toleration, an essentially modern notion . . . 130, 215
Tragedians, the Greek, their work 151
Trench, Archbishop, on the Schoolmen . . . 143

PAGE

Trent, the Council of, condemns the disreputable gains made from indulgences . . . 191
its reforms 210, 211

Valla, his character 156
his account of morality 159
Vinet, on the endless interpretations of the Bible . 196
on the necessity of religious freedom in the nineteenth century 243
Voltaire, the herald of the modern spirit 40
on the Jesuits 173, 175

Warburton, Bishop, on the lessons derivable from history 155
Warner, on Foxe 201
Wellington, the Duke of, on the results of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and Portugal 168
Westphalia, the Peace of 213
Wheeler, Mr. Talboys, on Mohammedanism in India 37
Wiesing, on the word *γένος* 3
Wordsworth, on Percy's *Reliques* 92
influence of, in promoting a juster view of the Middle Ages 95

Zamakhsharī, his explanation of a certain passage in the *Qu'rân* 62

PRINTED BY NICHOLS AND SONS, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.

283.239,5
L 34
Lilly William, S.
AUTHOR
Claims of Christianity
TITLE
DATE
BORROWER'S NAME